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THE SOUL OF THE APOSTOLATE

DOM CHAUTARD, O.C.R.

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION

Rev. J. A. MORAN, S.M.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Gustave Chautaed was bom of well-to-do parents in Briançon, an important frontier town in the Hautes-Alpes, March 29, 1858. After a brilliant career in the local schools, he was sent to the Commercial College of Marseilles. Here he came under the influence of the celebrated Père / Allemand, who exercised the same kind of apostolate in this city as did St. Philip Neri formerly in Rome. Gustave became one of the holy priest's most zealous disciples, spending much of his time visiting the sick and catechizing children. On April 14, 1877, he entered the Cistercian noviciate of Aiguebelle, Valence, taking the name of John Baptist. He took his final vows in i88r, and was ordained in 1884. In 1897 he became Abbot of Chambarand. Two years later he was called to govern Sept-Fons, Moulins. As this monastery possessed dependent houses in Brazil, Palestine, China, Holland, and Savoy, the change greatly widened his sphere of activity and added enormously to his responsibilities. Besides, he was often appointed to represent the Order in important matters. To him were entrusted the negotiations which resulted in the restoration of Citeaux, the Cistercian Mother-house, secularised since 1790 ; and to his courage and tact was due the preservation of the French monasteries in 1902, when they were threatened with dissolution by the anti-clerical government. His encounter with Clemenceau on this occasion belongs to history. For once the ''Tiger" knew how to take a beating, and remained ever after the Abbot's close friend. Even the Holy See sometimes chose Dom Chautard for confidential missions. On Sunday, September 29, 1935, when about to begin a sermon on the uncertainty of life, he collapsed in the chapter-room and died without recovering consciousness. The great heart that could beat only for God was now at rest and forever. Was it possible to combine so much external activity with the interior life he so strongly recommended ? It was, and he shows us how in his book. Like St. Bernard, he was no conduit but a reservoir, giving only of his superabundance ; a burning and a shining light, outwardly shining because burning inwardly.

WORDS OF POPE ST. PIUS X

Saint Pius X, in an audience granted in 1908 to Mgr. Cloutier, Bishop of Three-Rivers, Canada, addressed the following words to the Bishop, who was laying before His Holiness his many projects for the good of his diocese :

"And now, my dear Son, if you desire that God should bless your apostolate and make it fruitful, undertake everything for His glory, saturate yourself and your devoted fellow-w'orkers with the spirit of Jesus Christ, animating yourself and them with an intense interior life. To this end, I can offer you no better guide than *The Soul of the Apostolate* by Dom Chautard, Cistercian Abbot. I warmly recommend this book to you, as I value it very highly, and have myself made it my bedside book."

AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XV

(From the French)

To Our dear son, Dom J.-B. Chautard, *Abbot of the Trappist Monastery of Notre Dame de Sept-Fons,*

We address our warmest congratulations on his having excellently shown in his book entitled L'Ame de Tout Apostolat, *the necessity of the interior life for all engaged in good works, for the true success of their ministry ; and desiring that this work in which are to be found gathered together doctrinal lessons and practical advice suited to the needs of our time, may continue to spread and to do good,*

We send with all Our heart to its pious atithor an affectionate Apostolic Blessing.

Given at the Vatican, 18 March, 1915.

Benedict PP XV

OTHER TESTIMONIALS

His Eminence Cardinal Vico *sent along with the letter of the Sovereign Pontiff, the following lines :*

I hasten to send you herewith the Parchment that Our Holy Father, Pope Benedici XV, has kindly entrusted to me to transmit to you.

You will read in this revered autograph letter the great praise that His Holiness gives to your valuable book, *L'Ame de Tout Aposlolat.* The Holy Father has read this book with deep satisfaction.

Already Pius X *of holy memory* had entrusted me with the care of expressing his warm congratulations to the pious prelate who translated your book into Spanish.

From His Eminence Cardinal Sevin

Your book is a golden book. I have read it eagerly. Never has Pius X met with a commentator more pious, more learned, more eloquent, more practical on the thoughts with which he has filled his Exhortation to the Clergy and twenty other Encyclicals.

You may be sure that I have made this treasure known around me. Your book is used in the spiritual readings of both my seminaries. To Bishops and to a number of priests I have expressed a sincere admiration for your work.

From His Eminence Cardinal Mercier,
Archbishop of Mechlin

The events in which 1 have just taken part did not allow me sufficient freedom of mind and the leisure that I should have had to read your book with the attention which it deserves and to fix my mind on the sublime thoughts that you have set forth with such apostolic ardour.

From His Eminence Cardinal Vives

It is no small merit to have been able in your excellent work on the Interior Life and Apostolate to condense doctrine and practical method.

From His Eminence Cardinal Amette,
Archbishop of Paris

I read with much edification your book : *L'Ame de Tout Apostolat,* and I will be happy to recommend it to our priests and to zealous persons who devote themselves to good works. In Paris especially where the exterior work of the apostolate is so absorbing, it is of great importance to be always animated by that sap of the interior life which can alone assure its success.

From His Eminence Cardinal Fischer,
Archbishop of Cologne

I fully approve of what you have written with so much learning, so much experience in this matter and so much unction.

From His Eminence Cardinal Lucon,
Archbishop of Rheims

I appreciate the truth of the thesis which you develop and completely approve of it.

From His Eminence Cardinal Arcoverde, *Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro.*

To put on Jesus Christ, to live the life of Jesus Christ is the soul of every apostolate as you say in your excellent book.

From His Lordship D. Penon, *Bishop of Moulins*

Fresh and profound thoughts, impressive comments on several well known texts and on new texts taken from Holy Scripture and the Fathers, striking examples, most of them collected and vouched for by yourself in the goods works with which you have been intimately connected, in fine and above all, the personal note, with which you show forth the success of an apostolate, which results from the union of zeal and piety by *the Eucharistic and liturgical life,* add a more powerful attraction and assure a fuller efficacy to what you have already said so well in the first development of your fundamental thesis.

Priests, religious both men and women, lay people interested in the apostolate, will have no pretext for doing without this *vade mecum. Zealous souls* especially may distribute it widely so that it may be for everyone's use, not for reading once only, but *habitually,* so that they may go back to it, employ it for *meditation,* that it may serve for annual and monthly retreats and also for the training of *seminarists* or *novices.*

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PROLOGUE

Ex quo omnia,
Per quem omnia
In quo omnia x.

O God of goodness and majesty, how wonderful and dazzling are the truths that Faith teaches us concerning Thine own interior life!

Father all holy, Thou dost ever behold in Thy perfect reflection the Word—Thy Word *exults* entranced by Thy beauty—and from Your joint ecstasy *flames* forth a furnace of love, the Holy Ghost.

You alone, O adorable Trinity, are the true interior life, perfect, overflowing, infinite.

Goodness without limit, You wish to spread abroad Your inner life. You speak, and Your works spring forth out of nothingness to show Your perfection and sing Your glory.

Between You and the dust that Your breath has quickened an abyss exists. This the Holy Spirit of Your love wishes to bridge over; He will thus be enabled to satisfy His infinite need of loving and of giving Himself.

He draw's forth then from Your bosom the decree that we become *divine.* This clay fashioned by Your hand will have the pow'er to become *deified,* as it were, and share in Your eternal happiness.

Your Word offers Himself for this task, and He is made flesh, that we may become as gods. [1]

And yet, O Word, Thou *hast not left* the bosom of Thy

1. Liturgy. Fifth antiphon of Matins for the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity (quoted from I Cor., VIII, 6).
2. Factus est homo ut homo fieret deus (St. Augustine, *Sernt. g de Nafiv.).*

Father. There Thy essential life subsists, and it is from this source that the marvels of Thine Apostolate will flow.

O Jesus, Emmanuel, Thou dost give to Thine Apostles Thy Gospel, Thy Cross, Thy Eucharist, and Thou givest them their mission to go forth and beget for Thy Father His sons of adoption. Then Thou dost ascend to Thy Father. It is on Thee, O Spirit divine, that the care devolves of sanctifying and ruling the Mystical Body of the God-Man.[1]

To bring down the Life divine from the Head to the members of this Mystical Body, Thou dost deign to choose fellow-workers. Fired by the flames of Pentecost they will go forth to sow broadcast in the minds of men the word which enlightens, and in their hearts the grace which enkindles. Thus will they convey to men that divine life of which Thou art the fullness.

*
* *

O divine Fire, enkindle in all those who share Thine apostolate the flames which transformed those fortunate ones in their retreat in the Upper Room. They will then be no longer mere preachers of dogma or of morals, but apostles living to transfuse the divine Blood into the souls of men.

Spirit of light, imprint this truth in indelible characters on their minds: *that their apostolate will be successful only in the measure that they themselves live that supernatural inner life, of which Thou art the Sovereign* Principle *and Jesus Christ the* Source.

O infinite Charity, enkindle in their wills a *burning thirst* for the inner life. Penetrate their hearts with the outpourings of Thy sweetness and strength; make them feel that even here below there is no *true happiness* except in this life of imitating and sharing Thy life and that of the *Heart of Jesus* in the bosom of the Father of all mercy and of all tenderness.

i. Deus cujus Spiritu totum corpus sanctificatur et regitur (Liturgy).

O Mary Immaculate, Queen of the Apostles, deign to bless these simple pages. Grant that all those who read them, may *understand* that if it pleases God to make use of their activity as the ordinary instrument of His Providence in showering heavenly gifts on the souls of men, this activity, if it is to produce any result, must *in some way share the nature of the divine Act,* as thou didst behold it in the bosom of God, when He, to whom we owe the power of calling thee Mother, became incarnate in thy virginal womb.

PART ONE

GOOD WORKS AND THE INTERIOR LIFE ARE THE WILL OF GOD

1. Good works, and consequently zeal, are the will of God.

Sovereign liberality is an attribute of the Divine Nature. God is infinite goodness. Goodness longs to give itself and to make others share the riches it enjoys.

The life of Our Lord on earth was a continual manifestation of his boundless liberality. The Gospel shows the Redeemer scattering on His way the treasures of love from a Heart eager to draw men to truth and to fife.

This apostolic flame has been handed on by Our Lord to His Church, which is the gift of His love, and which continues His life, shows forth His truth, shines out with His holiness. The mystical Spouse of Christ, burning with the same ardour, carries on through the centuries the apostolic work of her divine Model.

Admirable is the plan, a law established by Providence, that *by man shall man know the path of salvation.*[1] Jesus Christ alone has shed the Blood which redeems the world. /Hone too He could have distributed its power to act on souls directly, as He does in the Holy Eucharist. But He has willed to have fellow-workers in the giving of His graces. Why ? No doubt His divine Majesty demanded that it be so, but His loving affection for men urged Him no less. And if it is seemly that a distinguished monarch governs as a rule through his ministers, how great is the condescension on the part of God to deign to associate poor creatures in His labour and in His glory !

Born on the cross, sprung from the pierced side of thei.

1. Ad communem legem id pertinet qua Deus providentissimus, ut homines plerumque fere per homines, salvandos decrevit ... ut nimirum, quemadmodum Chrysostomus ait, per homines a Deo discamus (Letter of Pope Leo XIII to Card. Gibbons, 22 Jan. 1899).

Saviour, the Church by its apostolic ministry carries on the bountiful, redeeming action of the God made man. This ministry in the design of Christ becomes the essential factor in the spread of His Church among the nations and the ordinary instrument of its conquests.

In this apostolate the first rank is held by the secular clergy, whose hierarchy forms the great body of the army of Christ, a clergy distinguished by so many holy, zealous bishops and priests, and honoured so gloriously by the recent canonization of the saintly Curé of Ars.

Beside this official clergy have arisen from the beginning of Christianity companies of *volunteers,* genuine chosen troops, whose continued and abundant growth will always be one of the clearest signs of the vitality of the Church.

First of all in the early centuries came the contemplative Orders, whose unceasing prayer and severe mortifications contributed so powerfully to the conversion of the pagan world. In the Middle Ages arose the preaching Orders, the mendicant Orders, the military Orders, and the Orders pledged to the ransom of captives in the power of the infidel. Finally modern times have seen springing up in crowds teaching institutes, missionary societies, congregations of all sorts, whose mission is to spread abroad every form of spiritual and corporal well-being.

Furthermore at every period of her history the Church has found valuable helpers in the ordinary faithful, such as those fervent Catholics, whose name to-day is legion, persons devoted to good works, ardent souls, -who uniting their forces give without reserve to the service of our common Mother their time, abilities, and fortune, often sacrificing their liberty and at times their lives.

A wonderful and consoling spectacle indeed is this providential harvest of good works, springing up at the requisite time, and so marvellously suited to the occasion. The history of the Church proves it ; every new want to be met, every danger to be overcome, has invariably found the institution called for by the need of the time.

Thus in our own day we see a number of good works almost unknown of old spring up to fight against evils

specially dangerous: Laymen's Retreats, Catholic Societies or Clubs for various timely purposes, the Apostleship of Prayer, the Work of the Propagation of the Faith, the Holy Childhood, the Association of the Catholic Press, the Total Abstinence Societies, and other good works, of both local and general usefulness. All these are forms of apostolic zeal produced by that spirit which fired the soul of Saint Paul: *"But I most gladly will spend and be spent myself for your souls*[1]"—the spirit which wishes to spread everywhere the benefits of the blood of Christ.

May these humble pages reach the soldiers of Christ, who full of zeal and ardour for their noble mission, might by the very activity they display, run the risk of not being *above all, men of interior Life!* Because of this they might one day be punished by unexpected failure, suffer serious spiritual loss, and be tempted to give up the fight and withdraw discouraged from the field.

The thoughts developed in this book have helped us ourselves to fight against dissipation of spirit through good works. May they help others too to avoid this bitter failure and have their courage renewed, when they see that the God of good works must never be deserted for the good works of God; that St. Paul's *"Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel*[2]" does not give us the right to forget *"What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?*[3]

Parents for whom the *"Introduction to a Devout Life"* is not out of date, husbands and wives who feel bound to an apostolate towards each other as well as to their children whom they train in the love and imitation of the Saviour, may also apply to themselves the teaching given by this little book. May they see more clearly the necessity to lead a life not only pious but interior, so as to make their zeal efficacious and spread in their homes the sweet odour of the

1. Ego autem libentissime impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris (II Cor., XII, 15).
2. Vae mihi si non evangelizavero (I Cor., IX, 16).
3. Quid prodest homini si mundum universum lucretur, animae vero suae detrimentum patiatur? (Matt., XVI, 26).

spirit of Christ, together with that unchanging peace which in spite of the trials of life will ever remain the attribute of families thoroughly Christian.

2. God wills Jesus to be the life of good works.

Science is proud of its immense success and justly so. One thing however has hitherto been impossible for it to accomplish, and will be for ever impossible : to create life, to produce from a chemical laboratory a grain of corn, a larva. The wholesale discomfiture of the defenders of spontaneous generation has taught us the falsity of these claims. God reserves for Himself the power of creating life.

In the vegetable and animal order living beings can increase and multiply ; even so their fecundity operates only under conditions fixed by the Creator. When it is a question of intellectual life, God reserves this to Himself, and He it is who directly creates the reasoning soul. Moreover there is a domain of which He is still more jealous, that of *supernatural life,* since it flows from the divine life communicated to the Humanity of the Incarnate Word.

The Incarnation and the Redemption establish Jesus as the source and the only Source of this divine fife, in which all men are called to share, " *Through Our Lord, Jesus Christ—through Him and with Him and in Him."* [1] The essential activity of the Church consists in spreading this fife by the Sacraments, by prayer, preaching and all the other works connected with these.

God does nothing except through His Son. *"All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made."* [2]

This is true in the natural order, but much more so in the supernatural order, when there is question of imparting His inner life, and sharing with men His own nature in order to make them children of God.

1. Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum—per ipsum et cum ipso et in ipso (Liturgy).
2. Omnia per ipsum facta sunt et sine ipso factum est nihil quod factum est. (Joan., I, 3).

"I am come that they may have life. In Him was life. I am the life." [1] How precise are these words! What light there is in that parable of the Vine and the branches, in which the Master develops this truth! How much He insists on it to impress on the minds of His apostles this fundamental principle that he alone, Jesus, is the life, and how much on this consequence, that in order to *share* in this life and *communicate* it to others, they must be grafted on to the God-Man!

Men called to the honour of working with the Saviour in transmitting this divine life must then look on themselves as mere channels, whose function is to draw from this unique source.

The apostle who would disregard this principle and think that he can produce the least sign of supernatural life without borrowing it all from Our Lord, would make one think that his theological ignorance was equalled only by his silly self-conceit.

But if the apostle, while recognising in theory that the Redeemer is the primary cause of all divine life, were to forget this truth in his actions, and blinded by a foolish presumption insulting to Our Lord, were to count but little on anything except his own strength, this would be a less disorder than the preceding, but one just as insufferable in the eyes of God.

To reject the truth, or to ignore it in one's actions, always constitutes an *intellectual disorder* in doctrine or in practice. It is the denial of a principle which should always inspire our conduct. Obviously the disorder will be still more marked if the light of truth, instead of shining clear, finds the heart of the apostle in opposition to the God of all light through sin or voluntary sloth.

Now for a man, while busied in good works, to behave in practice as if Jesus was not the sole principle of supernatural life is what Cardnal Mermillod has called "the Heresy of good works." With this expression he brandsi.

1. Veni ut vitam habeant (Joan., X, io)—In ipso vita erat (Joan., I, 4).—Ego sum vita (Joan., XIV, 6).

the folly of an apostle, who forgetting his secondary and dependent part would look for the success of his apostolic work from his own personal activity and talents.

Is not this a *denial* in practice *of a great part of the Treatise on Grace* ? This conclusion shocks you at first sight ; nevertheless when you think it over a while it is only too true. *Heresy of good works !* Feverish activity taking the place of the action of God ; grace disregarded ; the pride of man wishing to dethrone Christ's supernatural life ; the power of prayer, the plan of the Redemption put in the background, at least in practice ; this is a situation which is far from imaginary, and which the study of souls shows to be very common although in various degrees in this age of naturalism ; for nowadays men judge especially by appearance and act as if the success of a work depended chiefly on clever organisation.

By the simple light of sound philosophy, Revelation apart, one cannot help pitying a highly gifted man, who would refuse to acknowledge God as the principle of the marvellous talents that all observe in him.

What would be the feelings of a Catholic w'ell versed in his religion at the sight of an apostle who would set up a claim, at least implicitly, to do without God in imparting to souls even the smallest degree of divine life ?

" What a madman ! " we would say if we heard a minister of the gospel making use of such words as these : " My God, do not raise any obstacle to my enterprise, just do not interfere with it, and I undertake to carry it through successfully."

Our feeling would be a mere reflection of the aversion which the sight of such disorder provokes in God—the sight of a presumptuous man carrying his pride to the point of washing to give supernatural life, to produce faith, to put an end to sin, to guide men to virtue, to enkindle souLs to fervour—all by his own powers and without ascribing these results to the direct, unfailing, universal, and overwhelming action of the Precious Blood, the price, the cause and the medium of all grace and of all spiritual life.

Therefore, God owres it to the Humanity of His Son to

put these false christs to confusion by paralysing their works of pride or by allowing them only to pass away like a fleeting mirage.

With the exception of all that acts on the soul *ex opere operato* God owes it to the Redeemer to withdraw the choicest of His blessings from the apostle who is full of self-conceit, and to reserve them for the branch that humbly recognises that it draws its strength from the Vine that is Christ.

Otherwise, if God blessed by deep and lasting results an activity poisoned by that virus which we have called the *Heresy of good works,* then He would seem to encourage this disorder and allow its contagion to spread.

3. What is the interior Life?

The words, *life of prayer, contemplative life,* are applied in this book as in the *Imitation of Christ* to the state of those souls who devote themselves to a Christian life which is out of the common, but still accessible to all, and in substance obligatory for all.[1]

Without undertaking a study of asceticism, let us remind ourselves that *everyone is obliged to accept the following principles as absolutely essential for the inner government of his soul.*

First Truth. Supernatural life is the Life of Jesus Christ Himself *in my soul* by Faith, Hope and Charity; for Jesus is the *meritorious, exemplary* and *final* cause, and as the Word with the Father and Holy Ghost, He is the *efficient* cause of sanctifying grace in our souls.

The presence of Our Lord by this supernatural life is not the real presence proper to Holy Communion, but a presence of vital action like the action of the head or the heart on the members of the body; an interior action which God

I. Although not treating here of the phenomena which accompany certain extraordinary states of union with God, we are convinced that God often grants special graces of mental prayer to generous souls who thirst to live a life of union with Him.

hides as a general rule from my soul in order to increase the merit of my faith ; an action in consequence hidden usually from my natural faculties, and which faith alone obliges me to believe formally ; a divine action which does not interfere with my free will and makes use of all secondary causes, *persons, things, events,* to make known to me the Will of God, and to offer me the opportunity of acquiring or of increasing my share in the divine life.

This life begun in baptism by the *state of grace,* made perfect by confirmation, regained by penance, maintained and enriched by the Holy Eucharist, is my Christian life.

Second Truth. By this life Jesus Christ imparts to me *His spirit.* Thus He becomes the principle of a higher activity which prompts me, if I do not obstruct it, to think, to judge, to love, to will, to suffer, to work with Him, by Him, and like Him. My exterior actions become the manifestation of that life of Jesus in me. And thus I tend to realise the ideal of the Interior Life, expressed by Saint Paul : *"And I live, now not I ; but Christ liveth in me."*

Christian life, piety, interior life, holiness do not differ in essentials ; they are different degrees of the same love ; they are the twilight, the dawn, the light, the splendour of the same sun.

When in this book we use the expression *interior life* we refer not so much to the *habitual* interior life, which we may call the *principle* or *capital* of the divine life deposited in us by sanctifying grace, as to the *actual* interior life which invests this capital and puts it to work in the activity of our soul and in our fidelity to actual graces.

Thus I may define it : *the state of activity of a soul which strives against its natural inclinations in order to* regulate *them, and which endeavours to acquire* the habit *of judging* and *acting* in everything *according to the light of the gospel and the example of Our Lord.*

There are then two movements. By the first the soul turns away from anything in created things which is opposed to supernatural life, and seeks, without ceasing, to be recollected : *"aversio a creaturis."* By the second

the soul moves towards God and is united with Him : *"conversio ad Deum."*

The soul wishes in this way to be faithful to the grace which Our Lord offers her at every moment. In a word, she lives united to Jesus and bears out in action the truth of the words : *"He that abideth in me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."* [1]

Third truth. I should be depriving myself of one of the most powerful means of acquiring this interior life if I did not strive to have in my heart a precise, lively faith in this active presence of Jesus in my soul ; if I did not strive to make this presence within me a living reality, penetrating more and more into the life of my faculties. Jesus becoming in this way my light, my ideal, my counsel, my support, my resource, my strength, my healer, my consolation, my joy, my love, in a word *my life,* I shall acquire all the virtues. Then only shall I be able to utter with sincerity the admirable prayer of St. Bonaventure, which the Church puts before me as thanksgiving after Mass : *Transfige dulcissime Domine Jesu . . .*

Fourth truth. In proportion to the intensity of my love for God, my supernatural life can grow every moment by a new increase of the grace of the active presence of Jesus in my soul ; an increase produced :

1° By meritorious acts (of virtue or work or suffering in its various forms, such as privation of creatures, pain of body or mind, humiliation, self-denial ; prayer, Mass, acts of devotion to Our Lady, etc.).

2° By the Sacraments, especially the Blessed Eucharist.

It is then certain—and this consequence overwhelms me by its height and its depth, but especially delights and encourages me—it is certain that by *each* event, person or thing, Thou, O Jesus, *Thyself* dost present Thyself personally to me each moment. Thou hidest under these appearances Thy wisdom and Thy love and dost *request my co-operation to increase Thy life in me.*

1. Qui manet in me et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum (Joan., XV, 5).

O my soul, it is Jesus who presents Himself to thee by the grace of the present moment : every time there is a prayer to be said, Mass to be celebrated or heard, reading to be done, acts of patience, of zeal, of renunciation, of combat, of confidence, of love. Would you dare look the other way or turn aside ?

Fifth truth. The triple concupiscence caused by original sin and increased by each of my actual sins establishes in me elements of death opposed to the life of Jesus. Now *in proportion as these elements develop* they lessen the exercise of that life. Alas ! they may even reach the point of destroying it.

On the other hand feelings and inclinations contrary to that life, *even violent and prolonged* temptations, cannot injure it as long as my will is *in opposition to them*. And then, consoling truth, they even contribute to its *increase,* like every other element of the spiritual combat ; and this in proportion to my zeal.

Sixth truth. Without the faithful use of certain means my intelligence would become blind and my will too weak to co-operate with Our Lord to increase or even to maintain His life in my soul. Thereupon would come a progressive lessening of this life and a movement towards voluntary tepidity. 1 Through dissipation, cowardice, self-delusion, or blindness, I compromise with venial sin. Therefore I am not secure of salvation, because tepidity easily disposes to MORTAL SIN.

1. This tepidity is quite distinct from the dryness and even the disgust which fervent souls sometimes experience in spite of themselves. Venial faults which steal on us through human frailty and are resisted or detested as soon as committed do not prove *tepidity of the will.*

The soul that is tepid in this way has two wills in opposition ; one good, the other bad ; one hot, the other cold. On one hand it desires salvation, and therefore avoids evident mortal sins ; on the other hand it does not want what the love of God demands ; it wants on the contrary the comfort of a free and easy life ; for this reason it indulges in deliberate venial sins.

If I had the misfortune to fall into this tepidity (and still more, if I went yet lower) I should have to make every effort to get out of it. I should have to :

1° Revive the *fear of God* in my soul by putting myself in a vivid way face to face w'ith my last end, my death, the judgment of God, hell, eternity, the wages of sin, etc.

2° Revive my *compunction* by the loving contemplation of Thy wounds, O merciful Redeemer ! In spirit on Calvary" I would prostrate myself at Thy sacred feet, so that Thy living Blood flowing over my head and my heart might wash away my blindness, melt the ice of my soul and shake off the torpor of my will.

Seventh truth. I must seriously fear that I have not the degree of interior life that Our Lord requires of me :

1° If I cease to increase my thirst to live in Jesus, that thirst which gives me both the desire to please God in every thing and the fear to displease Him in any way whatever. This will of necessity take place if I do not employ the means of prevention, more especially : morning praycr, Mass, sacraments, office, particular and general examinations of conscience, spiritual reading ; or if through my fault I fail to profit from them.

2° If I have not the minimum of recollection which wall allow me during my work *to watch over my heart,* so that it may be pure and generous enough not *to stifle the voice of Our Lord,* which warns me of the elements of death as soon as they appear and urges me to resist them. Nowr, this minimum will be wanting if I do not use the means which will secure it : liturgical life, aspirations, especially in the form of supplication, spiritual communions, practice of the presence of God, etc.

Without this recollection *venial sins will go on increasing in my life and I may not even be aware of it.* To hide them and

When this tepidity is not resisted, that very fact shows there is bad faith in the soul, not complete, but partial ; that is to say there is one part of the will which says to God : " On such or such a point I do not wish to stop displeasing you " (P. Desurmont, C.SS.R., *Le retour continuel à Dieu).*

even conceal from me a more lamentable state of affairs self-delusion will make use of a seeming piety that is more speculative than practical, of my zeal for good works, etc. I shall be responsible for my own blindness, because my want of this absolutely essential recollection has caused and fostered it.

Eighth truth. My interior life will be what the custody of my heart is: *"Before all things keep a guard over thy heart, for from it springs forth life."* [1]

This guard over the heart is nothing else than *a watchful care,* habitual *or at least frequent, to preserve all my actions, as they are performed, from anything that could corrupt their* motive *or their* execution.

This watchfulness is calm, at ease, without strain, but resolute, because it is based on filial recourse to God.

It is a work for the heart and the will rather than for the mind, which must remain free to carry out its duties. Far from hampering action this custody of the heart makes it perfect, by regulating it according to the spirit of God and adjusting it to the duties of our state in life.

This exercise may be practised at any hour. It is a glance from the heart over present actions and a quiet attention to the various parts of an action as we perform it. It is carrying out exactly the *Age quod agis* of the *Imitation of Christ.* The soul like an alert sentinel keeps watch over all the movements of the heart and all that passes in the mind: impressions, intentions, passions, inclinations, in a word all its interior and exterior acts, its thoughts, words, deeds.

Custody of the heart demands a certain amount of recollection; there is no place for it in a soul given to dissipation.

By frequently performing this exercise we gradually acquire the *habit* of it.

"Quo vadam et ad quid! Where am I going and fori.

i. Omni custodia serva cor tuum quia ex ipso vita procedit (Prov., IV, 23).

what ? " What would Jesus do ? How would He act in my place ? What would He advise ? What does He ask of me at this moment ? Such are the questions which arise of their own accord in the soul eager for interior life.

For the soul which goes to Jesus through Mary this custody of the heart takes on a more affectionate quality and recourse to this good Mother becomes an almost continual need for the heart.

Ninth truth. Jesus Christ reigns in the soul when it aspires to imitate Him seriously, wholly, lovingly. There are two degrees in this imitation :

1° The soul strives to become indifferent to creatures considered in themselves, whether they suit its tastes or not. Following the example of Our Lord it wishes as a rule only the Will of God in everything : "I *came, down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent me"* [1]

2° *For Christ did not please Himself.*[2] The soul becomes more willingly disposed to do what is contrary to its natural inclination and what is repugnant to it. It practises then the *"agendo contra "* of which Saint Ignatius speaks in his well-known meditation on the Reign of Christ. It is *acting against* natural inclination in order to tend by preference to what imitates the poverty of the Saviour and His love for suffering and humiliation. Following the expression of St. Paul the soul then truly knows Our Lord : *You have learned Christ.*[3]

Tenth truth. Whatever my state in life may be, Our Lord offers me, if I am only willing to pray and be faithful to His grace, every means of returning to an interior life that will bestow on me His intimate friendship and enable me to develop His life in me. Then as this life increases in me my soul will always be *filled with joy* even in the midst of

1. Descendi de caelo non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan., VI, 38).
2. Christus non sibi placuit (Rom., XV, 3).
3. Didicistis Christum. (Ephes., IV, 20).

trials, and will realise for itself the words of Isaias : " *Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy health shall speedily arise and thy justice shall go before thy face and the glory of the Lord shall gather thee up. Thou shalt call and the Lord shall hear ; thou shalt cry and he shall say, 'Here I am.' And the Lord will give thee rest continually, and will fill thy soul with brightness and deliver thy bones, and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a fountain of water, whose waters do not fail."* [1]

Eleventh truth. If God calls me to devote my energy not only to my own sanctification but also to good works, I must establish this firm conviction before all else in my mind : Our Lord must be and wishes to be the life of these works.

My efforts by themselves are nothing, absolutely nothing : *" Without me you can do* nothing [2]." They will be useful and have the blessing of God only if by means of a true interior life I unite them constantly to the life-giving action of Christ. Then they will become *all-powerful : I can do* all *things in Him who strengtheneth me.*[3] But if they spring from pride and self-conceit, from confidence in my own talents, from a desire of success, they will be rejected by God ; for would it not be sacrilegious folly on my part to steal from God a share in His glory in order to glorify myself ?

Far from producing want of initiative this conviction wall be my strength. And it will make me realise the need of prayer to obtain this humility, which is such a treasure for my soul, since it is a guarantee of God's help and of success in my labours.

Convinced of the importance of this principle I will seriously examine myself during my retreats to discover : whether my conviction of the nothingness of my activity left to itself and of its effectiveness when united to Our

1. Is., LVIII, 8, 9, ii.
2. Sine me nihil potestis facere (Joan., XV, 5).
3. Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat (Phil., IV, 13).

Lord's is not getting a little dull; whether I stamp out utterly all self-satisfaction and vanity, all complacency in my life as an apostle; whether I am steadfast in complete distrust of myself; whether I pray God to give life to my work and preserve me from pride, which is the first and chief obstacle to His assistance.

This credo of the interior life, once it has become for the soul the foundation of its existence, assures it even here below of a share in the happiness of heaven.

The interior life is the life of the elect. It answers the end which God had in creating us.[1]

It answers the end of the Incarnation: *God hath sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we may live by Him.*[2]

It is a state of happiness: *The end of human creatures is to be united to God; in this does their whole happiness consist.*[3] It is a joy unlike the joys of the world, for if thorns exist on the outside, roses bloom within. "How much are poor worldly people to be pitied," said the holy Curé of Ars. "They carry on their shoulders a mantle lined with thorns, they cannot make a movement without being hurt; while true Christians have a mantle lined with fur." *They see the cross; they do not see the consolation.*[4][5]

Heavenly state! The soul already lives in heaven.[6] Like St. Margaret Mary it sings, "I possess at all times

1. Ad contemplandum quippe Creatorem suum homo conditus fuerat ut ejus semper speciem quaereret atque in soliditate amoris illius habitaret (St. Gregory the Great, *Moralia*, VIII, 12). Man was created to contemplate his Creator, in order that he might always seek the vision of His countenance and dwell in the certainty of His love.

2. Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum ut vivamus per eum (I Joan., IV, 9).

3. Finis humanae creaturae est adherere Deo; in hoc enim felicitas ejus consistit (St. Thomas Aquinas).

4. Crucem vident, unctionem non vident (St. Bernard).

5. Semper memineris Dei et caelum mens tua evadit (St. Ephrem).—Mens animae paradisus est, in qua dum caelestia meditatur quasi in paradiso voluptatis delectatur (Hugo of St. Victor).

Always be mindful of God and your mind will scale the heavens. The mind is the soul's paradise, wherein, while it meditates on heavenly things, it rejoices as though in a paradise of delight.

and I hold in all places, the God of my heart and the Heart of my God."

It is the beginning of beatitude : *Inchoatio quadam beatitudinis.*[1] Grace is the seed of heaven.

4. How much this interior Life is neglected.

St. Gregory the Great, a clever administrator and zealous apostle but none the less a great contemplative, sums up in the words, *"He lived with himself,"* [2] the state of soul of St. Benedict when, at Subiaco, he was laying the foundation of his Rule, which became one of the most powerful levers of the apostolate that God has made use of on earth.

We must come to quite the opposite conclusion about the great majority of our contemporaries. *To live with oneself, in oneself, to wish to govern oneself* and not be governed by exterior things, to reduce one's imagination, one's feeling, even one's intelligence and memory to the part *of servants of the will,* and to make this will conform always to the Will of God, is a programme that is less and less welcome in this century of feverish excitement, which has seen a new ideal spring up : *the love of action for action's sake.*

To escape from this discipline of the faculties any pretext is held to be good enough : business, family cares, health, good reputation, love of country, the honour of one's congregation, the pretended glory of God ; all these vie with each other to prevent us *from living within ourselves.* This sort of frenzy for exterior life finally succeeds in gaining an irresistible attraction over us.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that the interior life is neglected ?

" Neglected " is putting it mildly; it is often despised and turned into ridicule by those very men who ought to be the first to appreciate its advantages and its necessity. Pope Leo XIII wrote a special letter of protest against

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, 2a, 2ae, q. 180, a.4.
2. Secum vivebat.

the dangerous consequences of an exclusive devotion to good works.

To avoid the *toil of living the interior life* priests go so far as to pay but little attention to the value of *the life with Jesus, in Jesus, for Jesus ;* they forget that in the plan of the Redemption everything is founded on the *eucharistie life* no less than on the rock of Peter. The feverish partisans of the exterior Apostolate are working unwittingly to thrust what is essential into the background. For them the tabernacle is not yet empty ; they believe in the Blessed Eucharist, but no longer see in it a source of life as necessary for them as for their works. The eucharistie life in their opinion can hardly be adapted to the demands of modern civilisation, still less can it suffice for its needs ; the interior life, which of necessity derives from the eucharistie life, for them has had its day.

For persons steeped in these theories, and their number is legion, Holy Communion has lost the true meaning which it had among the early Christians. We must not be astonished then that, as the intimate union with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament almost no longer exists for them, they have come to consider the interior life only as a mere memory of the Middle Ages.

Indeed to hear these workers speaking of their exploits one would think that the Almighty, in whose eyes the world is but a toy and before whom the universe is only dust and ashes, cannot do without their co-operation. Gradually a number of the faithful, aye even priests and religious, go so far in their veneration for action as to make *a kind of dogma* of it ; this dogma inspires their attitude and their actions and leads them to give themselves up without restraint to the exterior life. " The church, the diocese, the parish, the congregation, the work has need of me," they would like to say . . . I am almost necessary to God." And if they do not dare show such folly openly, still at the bottom of their hearts lie hidden both the presumption which is the base of their self-conceit, and the dwindling faith w'hich has begotten it.

Neurasthenic people are often advised to give up all work,

sometimes for a long period. This remedy is for them unbearable ; their very illness keeps them in a state of feverish excitement which has become for them a *second nature,* and drives them to expend without intermission a fresh outlay of strength and emotion which increases their disease.

The same thing frequently happens with regard to the interior life in the case of men busied in good works. They despise or rather detest the interior life all the more, because in the practice of it lies the only remedy for their morbid state. Rather than do that they strive to bury these thoughts under an ever increasing avalanche of ill-managed enterprises ; thus they set aside all hope of cure.

The ship drives on full steam ahead. While those who control it admire the speed at which it goes, in the eyes of God the boat for want of a skilful pilot is off course and runs the risk of shipwreck. What Our Lord asks for above all else is adorers in spirit and in truth. As for the apostolic worker without interior life, he imagines that he is giving great glory to God by aiming chiefly at exterior results.

This state of mind explains why in our day, in spite of the appreciation shown for schools, dispensaries, missions, and hospitals devotion to God in its interior form by penance and prayer is less and less understood. No longer having any belief in the value of hidden sacrifice, these people do not hesitate to regard as sluggards and visionaries those who give themselves to the hidden life in the solitude of the cloister with a zeal for the salvation of souls equal to that of the most energetic missionaries ; nay, they even ridicule those people engaged in good works who think it essential to escape for a few moments from even the most useful exterior duties to purify and rekindle their zeal before the Tabernacle so as to obtain from the divine Host the best results for their work.

5. Reply to a first objection : Is the interior Life lazy ?

This book is intended for persons who are devoted to good works, and are filled with an ardent desire to toil hard, but who run the risk of neglecting the measures necessary

to make their devotedness fruitful for souls without lessening their own interior life.

It is not our object to rouse up those would-be apostles who devote themselves to repose ; nor to galvanise those souls whom selfishness deludes into thinking that idleness is a means of fostering piety ; nor to shake off the indifference of those lazy folk, those sleepy heads who in the hope of material advantages or honours will accept certain work provided it in no way disturbs their ease or their ideal of tranquillity. Such a task would require a special volume.

Leaving to others then the task of getting the indifferent to understand the responsibilities of an existence which God *wishes to be active,* and which the demon in collusion with human nature makes barren by inaction and lack of zeal, let us return to those zealous souls for whom our pages are destined.

No comparison can give any idea of the infinite intensity of the activity which prevails in the bosom of Almighty God. The interior life of the Father is such that it begets a divine Person. From the interior life of the Father and the Son proceeds the Holy Ghost.

The interior life given to the Apostles in the Upper Room at once inflamed their zeal.

This inner life is a principle of devoted action for any well-informed person who does not wilfully misunderstand it.

But even supposing that the life of prayer did not reveal itself exteriorly, it is in itself and of itself a source of activity, beyond compare. Nothing could be further from the truth than to see in it a sort of oasis for those who want to pass their life in tranquil ease. The fact that it is the shortest road to the kingdom of heaven is reason enough why the text, "*The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away* [1]" should be specially applied to it.

Dom Sebastian Wyart,[2] who was as well acquainted

1. Regnum caelorum vim patitur et violenti rapiunt iilud (Matt., XI, 12).

2. Having served as Captain in the Papal Zouaves, he entered the Order of the Reformed Cistercians whose Abbot General he became.

with the work of an ascetic as with the fatigue of a soldier's life, and who knew the cares of study and the worries attached to the office of superior, was fond of remarking that there were three kinds of work :

1° Work almost exclusively of the body performed by those who are employed in manual labour, such as labourers, craftsmen, soldiers. This work, he asserted, in spite of what one may think, is the easiest of the three.

2° The intellectual work of the scholar, the thinker, in his arduous search for truth ; that of the writer, of the professor, who take every means to convey the truth to other minds ; that of the diplomat, the merchant, the engineer ; the intellectual effort required of a general during a battle to foresee, direct and decide, etc. This labour in itself, he said, is far more difficult than the first, and the saying, *"The blade wears out the sheath,"* expresses this difference.

3° Finally, there is the work of the interior life. He did not hesitate to declare that of the three this was the most exacting, when taken seriously.1 But it is also the one that offers the most consolation here below ; and it is the most important ; it goes to make not so much the man's profession as the man himself. How many there are of those who can boast of their prowess in the first two kinds of work which lead to fortune and success, but who show only sluggishness, laziness and cowardice, when there is question of trying to acquire virtue ?

The ideal for a man who is determined to acquire the inner life is to strive to acquire unremitting control over himself and his surroundings, so as to act in all things only for the glory of God. To realise this ideal he must strive under all circumstances to remain united to Our Lord and thus to keep his eyes fixed on the goal to be aimed at and to weigh everything by the light of the Gospel. *Where am i.*

1. Major labor est resistere vitiis et passionibus quam corporalibus insudare laboribus (St. Gregory the Great).
Greater effort is needed to resist our vices and passions than to toil in manual labour.

7 *going and for -what ?* 1 he repeats with St. Ignatius. Everything in him then, intelligence and will as well as memory, feeling, imagination and the senses, depends on principle. *But what an effort it will cost him to reach this result !* Whether he mortifies himself or allows himself some lawful joy ; whether he is thinking or acting ; whether he works or rests ; whether he tends to what is good or feels aversion for what is evil ; whether he is moved by desire or fear ; whether he meets joy or sorrow ; full of hope or of fear ; angered or calm ; in everything and always he steadily strives to steer his course in the direction of God's good pleasure. In prayer, especially before the Blessed Sacrament, he isolates himself still more completely from things visible, so as to reach the point of conversing wdth *the invisible God as if he saw Him.*2 Even in the midst of his apostolic work he aims at realising this ideal which St. Paul admires in Moses.

Neither the troubles of life, nor the storms raised by the passions, can make him swerve from the line of conduct he has laid down for himself. Besides, if he stumbles for a moment, he pulls himself together at once and goes marching forward more steadily than ever.

What a task it is ! Now we understand why God rewards even here below with *special joys* the man who does not shrink from the strain that this work entails.

" Idlers ? " concluded Dom Sebastian. " Are these true religious, these truly interior and zealous priests, idlers ? Nonsense. Let the busiest men of the world come and see whether their work can be compared to ours."

Who does not know this from experience ? We should be tempted to prefer sometimes long hours of wearying toil to half an hour of serious meditation, to hearing Mass well, to careful recitation of the breviary.3 Father Faber

1. Quo vadam et ad quid ?
2. invisibilem enim, tanquam visibilem sustinuit (Heb., XI, 27).
3. Quotation from Dom Festugiere, O.S.B. : " Whatever may be the difficulties of the active life, it is only the inexperienced who dare deny the trials of the interior life. Many *active* workers, very pious men, admit that often what costs them most in life is not action but prayer of obligation. They are relieved when the hour for action strikes."

expresses his grief in admitting that for certain people " the quarter of an hour after communion is the weariest quarter hour of the day." When a retreat of three days is to be made, what unwillingness some feel ! To withdraw for three days from a life which though busy is comparatively easy, and *live in the supernatural,* making it sink into all the details of our existence during this retreat ; to force one's mind during this time to see everything by the light of Faith alone and one's heart to forget everything so as to aspire to Jesus alone and His life ; to remain face to face with oneself and lay bare the infirmities and weaknesses of one's soul ; to cast this soul into the crucible with no pity for its angry protests—this is a prospect which repels a number of people, who are otherwise quite ready to face any fatigue, provided it is only a question of expending purely natural energy.

And if only three days of such occupation seem already too exhausting, what will the natural man think of the idea of a *whole life* to be made *gradually* subject to the rule of the interior life ?

No doubt in this work of woaning the soul grace has a large share and makes the yoke sweet and the burden light. But still what efforts the soul has to make ! It is always hard to get back on to the right road and return to the principle of *" our conversation is in heaven."* [1] St. Thomas explains this very well : man is placed in between the things of this world and spiritual benefits in which eternal happiness consists. The more he clings to the one, the further he recedes from the other and *vice versa.* [2] If one side of the scale goes down, the other goes up just as much.

Now the catastrophe of original sin which upset the whole economy of our being has made this double movement of drawing towards and drawing away very difficult to carry out. To re-establish order and balance in this little world

1. Conversatio nostra in caelis est (Phil., III, 20).
2. Est homo constitutus inter res mundi huius et bona spiritualia in quibus aeterna beatitude consistit, ita quod quanto plus inhaeret uni eorum, tanto plus recedit ab altero, et e contrario (ia, 2ae, q. 108, a.4).

which is man, and to preserve it by the interior life, requires work, suffering, and sacrifice. We have a ruined house to rebuild and then to preserve from a fresh collapse.

What a task it is! We have a heart weighted with the burden of a corrupt nature, "*a heavy heart.*"[1] We must tear it away from earthly thoughts by vigilance, self-denial, and mortification; we must remake its character especially in all those points where it is most unlike the features of our Saviour's soul, for instance in its dissipation, bad temper, self-satisfaction, display of pride, or inordinate natural feeling, harshness, selfishness, want of kindness, etc.; we must resist the allurement of immediate pleasure by the hope of spiritual happiness, which we will enjoy only after a long wait; we must detach ourselves from all that may make us love things here below, and make a holocaust without reserve of all creatures, desires, longings, concupiscence, exterior goods, self-will, and private judgment[2]

And yet this is only the *negative side* of the interior life. This is the hand-to-hand struggle, which made St. Paul groan;[2] and which Father de Ravignan expressed as follows: "You ask me what I did during my novitiate? Well, there were two of us; I threw the other fellow out of the window and then I was alone." After this ruthless fight against an enemy ever ready to spring up again when defeated, we must guard our heart against the slightest return of the natural spirit, our heart purified by penance and now burning with the desire to repair the insults offered to God; it must devote all its energy to keeping itself solely attached to tiie invisible beauty of the virtues to be acquired so as to imitate those of Our Lord; it must endeavour to maintain an absolute trust in Providence even in the smallest details of life. This is the *positive side* of

1. Gravi corde (Ps. IV).

2. Condelector enim legi Dei secundum interiorem hominem; video autem aliam legem in membris meis repugnantem legi mentis meae, et captivantem me in lege peccati, quae est in membris meis. Infelix ego homo; quis me liberabit de corpore mortis hujus? (Rom,, VII, 22-24).

the interior life ; any one can guess the unlimited field of work that it opens up.

This work is personal, steady and constant. And yet it is precisely by this work that the soul acquires a wonderful facility and astounding quickness in carrying out apostolic works. This secret belongs to the interior life alone.

The immense labours accomplished in spite of indifferent health by St. Augustine, St. John Chrysostom, St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Vincent de Paul, fills us with astonishment. But we are still more amazed to see how these men in spite of their almost unceasing toil kept themselves in the most constant union with God. Quenching their thirst more than others do at the source of life by contemplation, these saints drew from it a vast capacity for more work.

One of our great Bishops overburdened as he was with his duties explained this to a statesman, who also was hard pressed with work and who had asked the Bishop the secret of his constant calm and of the admirable results of his work. " My dear friend," said the Bishop, " add to your other occupations half an hour's meditation every morning. Not only will you get through all your business, but you will find time for still more."

Finally, do we not see St. Louis, king of France, finding in the eight or nine hours which he was accustomed to give to the exercises of the interior life the secret of his strength in applying himself with so much care to state affairs and to the good of his subjects ? So much so that a socialist orator avowed that never even in our own time had so much been done for the working classes as under the reign of this king.

6. Reply to another objection : Is the interior Life selfish ?

We are not talking of lazy persons or of spiritual gluttons for whom the interior life consists in the joys of agreeable idleness and who seek far more the consolations of God than the God of consolation. They have only a false piety. But

the man who either thoughtlessly or after consideration declares that the interior life is selfish does not understand it any better than they do.

We have already said that this life is the pure and abundant source of the most generous works of charity towards souls and of the charity which aims at the relief of suffering on earth. Let us examine the usefulness of this life from another point of view.

Was the interior life of Mary and of Joseph selfish and sterile? What blasphemy and what absurdity! And yet no exterior work is attributed to them. The mere influence upon the world of an intensive interior life, the merits of the prayers and sacrifices applied to the extension of the benefits of the redemption were enough to establish Mary Queen of the Apostles, and Joseph Patron of the Universal Church. [1]

"*My sister hath left me alone to serve,*" [2] says the fool who borrows the words of Martha, and sees only his own exterior work and its result.

His folly and want of understanding of the ways of God do not go the full length of imagining that God can scarcely get on without him. And yet he still loves to repeat with Martha, incapable of appreciating the excellence of Magdalen's contemplation, "*Sfieak to her that she help me.*" [3] He even cries out, "*To what purpose is this waste?*" [4] condemning as a waste of time the moments that his fellow apostles, more spiritual than he, reserve for contemplation so as to make sure of their interior life with God.

"*And for them do I sanctify myself that they also may be sanctified in truth,*" [5] replies the soul of the apostle who has caught the full bearing of this phrase "that they also," and who, knowing the value of prayer and sacrifice, joins to the tears and blood of the Redeemer the tears of his own

1. In another chapter we shall see that it is the interior life which gives good works their fruitfulness.
2. Soror mea reliquit me solam ministrare (Luc., X, 40).
3. Dic illi ut me adjuvet (Luc., X, 40).
4. Ut quid perditio haec? (Matt., XXVI, 8).
5. Pro eis ego sanctifico meipsum ut sint et ipsi sanctificati in veritate (Joan., XVII, 19).

eyes and the blood of his heart, which becomes more and more pure every day.

With Jesus the interior soul hears the voice of the crimes of the world rising towards heaven and calling down punishment upon the guilty; it delays the sentence by the omnipotence of its supplication which is able to restrain the hand of God when he is about to hurl the thunderbolt.

"Those who pray," said the eminent statesman, Donoso Cortes, after his conversion, "do more for the world than those who fight; and if the world goes from bad to worse, it is because there are more battles than prayers."

"Hands lifted up," said Bossuet, "destroy more battalions than hands that strike." In the midst of their deserts the solitaries of the Thebaid cherished in their hearts the same fire of zeal which animated St. Francis Xavier. "They seemed to some," says St. Augustine, "to have abandoned the world more than they should:" *Videntur nonnullis res humanas plus quam opportet deseruisse.* "But people forget," he adds, "that their prayers, purified more and more by this withdrawal from the world, were all the more powerful and necessary for this depraved world."

A short but fervent prayer will usually promote a conversion far better than long discussions and fine speeches. He who *prays is in touch with the* Primary Cause; he acts *directly* on it. In this way he has influence over all secondary causes, since it is only from the first principle that they derive their efficacy. Consequently the desired effect is gained both more surely and more quickly.

Ten thousand heretics according to a credible revelation were converted by a single burning prayer of the seraphic St. Teresa. Her soul all on fire for Christ could not understand a contemplative life, an interior life, which would take no interest in the intense anxiety of the Saviour for the salvation of souls. "I would," she said, "accept purgatory till the last judgment to deliver a single one of them. What would the length of my suffering signify if I could thus set free a single soul, let alone many, for the greater glory of God?" Addressing her nuns she said: "Bring to bear, my children, on this apostolic

objective your prayers, your disciplines, your fasting, your desires."

And this of a certainty is the work of the Cannelite, Trappistine and Poor Clare nuns. See how they follow the progress of apostles, supplying them abundantly with their prayers and their penances. Their prayers swoop down from on high on the souls of men, their divine prey, as far as the Cross advances and the light of the Gospel shines. Better still, it is their hidden but active love of souls which everywhere throughout the world of sinners awakens pleas for mercy.

Here below no one knows the reason for those conversions of pagans in distant lands, for the heroic endurance of persecuted Christians, for the heavenly joy of martyred missionaries. All this is invisibly connected with the prayer of some humble cloistered nun. With her fingers on the keyboard of divine forgiveness and eternal light, her silent and lonely soul presides over the salvation of souls and the conquests of the Church.

" I want the Trappists in this apostolic vicariate," said Dr. Favier, Bishop of Pekin, " even to abstain from all exterior ministry in order that nothing may distract them from the work of prayer, penance and sacred study. For I know the great help our missionaries will gain from the existence of a monastery of fervent contemplatives among our poor Chinese people." And later on he said, " We have at last succeeded in penetrating a region hitherto difficult of access. I attribute this success to our Trappists."

"Ten Carmelite nuns in prayer," said a Bishop of Cochin-China to the Governor of Saigon, " will be a greater help to me than twenty missionaries preaching."

Secular priests, religious, both men and women devoted to the active, *but also to the interior life,* share in the same power over the heart of God as the souls of the cloister. Father Chevrier and Doni Bosco are striking examples of this. The venerable Anne-Marie Taigi in her duties as a poor housekeeper was an apostle, just as was St. Benedict Joseph Labre avoiding the beaten track. M. Dupont, the holy man of Tours, and others consumed by the same ardour, were

powerful in their good works because of the interior life they led. And General de Sonis in between two battles found the secret of his apostolate in his union with God.

Was the life of the holy Curé of Ars selfish and sterile ? Silent contempt is all that such an assertion deserves. Every sensible mind attributes the zeal and the success of this priest who was without natural talent to the perfection of his union with God. As contemplative as a Carthusian, he felt a thirst for souls, which his progress in the interior life had made unquenchable ; and he received from Our Lord in whom he lived, a share, so to speak, in the divine power to make conversions.

Was his interior life without result ? Suppose we had a Saint Vianney in each diocese ; before ten years the world would be regenerated ; and much more completely than it could be by countless good works not sufficiently founded on the interior life, even if they were supported by the talent and activity of thousands of apostles and helped by unlimited funds.

Nowadays the whole power of hell seems more than ever bent upon fighting against the moral power of the Church and stifling the divine fife hi souls.

Beyond all doubt, the chief reason for hoping that all these efforts will prove unavailing is that at no other period, perhaps, has there been so great a proportion of souls even among lay people anxious to live united to the Heart of Jesus and to extend His reign by promoting around them the interior life. This is very evident in recent years. A small minority, perhaps, these chosen souls. But what matters the number, if there is intensity of soul ?

Every apostle should be one of those chosen souls.

No doubt the giving up of the liturgical life and the ending of its enlightening influence over the faithful have contributed to give us a spiritual fife which has become narrow, dry, superficial, exterior, or wholly sentimental ; it no longer possesses that depth and that enthusiasm of the soul, which only the liturgy, that great source of Christian vitality, can give.

But there may be another cause ? If we priests are able

to produce in souls only a surface piety, without any powerful ideals or strong convictions ; if we teachers are more keen to gain successes in examinations and glory for our school than to impart to our pupils a solid religious instruction ; if we toil and labour without aiming above all at the training of the will, so as to imprint on these plastic natures committed to our care the mark of Jesus Christ, could not the mediocre results obtained be attributed to the *commonplace* quality of our interior life ?

" A holy priest," the saying goes, " makes a fervent people ; a fervent priest a pious people ; a pious priest a fairly good people ; a fairly good priest, a godless people." The spiritual children are always one degree less intense in holiness than their spiritual fathers in Christ.

We would not go so far as to accept this proposition, but we consider that the following words of St. Alpbonsus sufficiently express to what cause we must assign the responsibility for our actual situation :

" The good morals and the salvation of the people depend on good pastors. If there is a good parish priest in charge of the parish, you will soon see devotion flourish, the sacraments frequented, mental prayer esteemed and practised. Hence the proverb : like pastor like parish, *Qualis pastor, talis parochia.* According to the text of Ecclesiasticus (X, 2) : " Those who dwell in a state take after their ruler : *Qualis est rector civitatis, tales et habitantes in ea."* (Homo apost. VII, 16).

7. Objection drawn from the importance of salvation of souls.

But how can I dare limit my works of zeal ? says the soul devoted to exterior work and seeking for arguments against the inner life. Can I ever do too much, when the salvation of souls is at stake ? Does not my activity make up for everything, and amply too, by my sublime practice of devotedness ? He who works, prays. Sacrifice excels prayer. Does not St. Gregory say that zeal for souls is the most agreeable sacrifice that we can offer to God ? *Nullum sacrificium est Deo magis acceptum quam zelus animarum."* (Hom. 12, in Ezech).

First of all, let us fix the exact sense of this quotation from St. Gregory by borrowing the words of the Angelic Doctor. "To offer sacrifice spiritually to God is to offer Him something which glorifies Him. Now of all things, the most pleasing that man can offer to the Lord is unquestionably the salvation of a soul. But each one must first offer his own soul, as the Scripture says: *If you wish to please God, have pity on your own soul.* When this first sacrifice has been offered, then we shall be allowed to procure for others a similar happiness. The more closely a man unites to God first, his own soul and then another's soul, the more acceptable is his sacrifice. But this intimate and generous but humble union can be effected only by mental prayer. To devote oneself to the life of prayer or of contemplation or to get others to do so, pleases the Lord more than to give oneself to good works, or to induce others to do so. And so," he concludes, "when St. Gregory asserts that the sacrifice most pleasing to God is the salvation of souls, *he does not mean by that to give the active life the preference over contemplation,* but he means that to offer to God one single soul gives Him infinitely more glory and obtains more merit for us than if we presented Him with the most precious things to be found on earth." [1]

The necessity of the interior life should in no way deter generous souls from works of zeal, provided it is clear that the will of God makes it a duty to undertake the responsibility for such works. To shun this work, or only to carry it out carelessly, or to desert the field of battle under pretext of improving our soul and reaching a closer rmion with God, would be a grave error and in certain cases a source of real danger. *Woe unto me,* says St. Paul, *if I preach not the gospel*[2]

With this reservation let us hasten to say that to devote oneself to the conversion of souls, while neglecting one's own salvation, w'ould be an even greater mistake. God

1. St. Thomas Aquinas, 2a, 2ae, q. 182, a2, adj.
2. Vae mihi si non evangelizavero (I Cor., IX, 16).

wishes us to love our neighbour as ourselves, but *never more than ourselves;* that is to say, never to the extent of harming ourselves personally. This in practice is equivalent to requiring us to take more care of our own souls than of those of others, since our zeal ought to be guided by charity and *Charity for oneself first* (Charity begins at home) is a theological axiom.[1]

"I love Jesus Christ" said St. Alphonsus de Liguori, "and that is why I bum with the desire of giving souls to him, my own first, then a countless number of others." This is putting into practice the advice of St. Bernard, *In all places belong to thyself.*[2] The same saint declared: *No man is truly wise who is not wise for himself*— Non ergo sapiens, qui sibi non est.

This holy Abbot of Clairvaux, a miracle of apostolic zeal, followed this advice. Geoffrey of Auxerre, his secretary, describes him for us: "He belonged first entirely to himself, and thus he belonged entirely to all men."[3]

"I do not tell you," writes the same saint to Pope Eugenius III, "to withdraw completely from secular occupations. I only exhort you not to give yourself up completely to them. If you are a man belonging to everybody, belong also to yourself. Otherwise what would it serve you to save all the others, if you are lost yourself? Keep then something for yourself, and if every one wants to drink at your fountain, do not deprive yourself of drinking there too. What! must you be the only one to remain thirsty? It would be in vain for you to lavish care on others, if you neglect yourself. Let all your consideration then BEGIN FOR YOURSELF AND FINISH IN THE SAME MANNER. Be for yourself the first and the last, and remember that in the business of your salvation, no one is more nearly related to you than the only son of your mother."[4]

1. Prima sibi caritas. 2. Tuus esto ubique.

3. Totus primum sibi et sic totus omnibus (Gaufridus, Vita S. Bernardi).

4. A te tua inchoetur consideratio ne frustra extendaris in alia, te neglecto ... Tu tibi primus, tu ultimus ... in acquisitione salutis nemo tibi germanior est unico matris tuae (St. Bernard, 1, II de Consid., c. III).

This retreat note of Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans is very suggestive : "I am so dreadfully active that I am ruining my health, disturbing my piety, and not increasing my knowledge. This must be corrected. God has given me the grace to see that what is especially opposed to the building up of an interior life in my soul is my natural activity, and the attraction of business matters. I have recognised moreover that this want of interior life is the source of all my faults, of all my troubles, of all my dryness, my weariness, my bad health of soul.

I have resolved therefore to direct all my efforts to acquiring this interior life which is wanting in me ; with that object I have by the grace of God taken the following resolutions :

1° I will always take more time than is necessary to do each thing ; this means that I shall not be hurried and distracted.

2° Since I have always more things to do than time in which to do them and since this prospect worries me and drives me to distraction, I will no longer consider the things I have to do, but the time that I have at my disposal. I will make use of my time without losing a moment of it, beginning with the most important duties ; for those that are left undone, I shall not worry about them, etc."

A jewel merchant prefers the least fragment of a diamond to several sapphires. Thus in the order established by God our intimacy with Him glorifies Him more than all the good which we may be able to procure for a great number of souls, but to the detriment of our own spiritual progress. Our Heavenly Father, *who devotes Himself more to the direction of a soul in which He reigns than to the natural government of the whole universe and the civil government of all empires* [1] looks for this harmony in our zeal.

He prefers sometimes to let an enterprise fail, if He sees it is becoming an obstacle to the development of divine charity in the soul engaged in it.i.

1. P. Lallemant, *Doct. spirit.*

Satan on the contrary does not hesitate to encourage a success that is purely superficial, if he can by means of this success prevent the apostle from making progress in the interior life ; so clearly does his rage guess what it is that Our Lord values most highly. To destroy the diamond he is quite willing to give us a few sapphires.

PART TWO

THE UNION OF THE ACTIVE LIFE AND THE INTERIOR LIFE

1. Priority in the eyes of God of the interior Life over the active Life.

In God is life, all life. He is life itself. Now it is not in His exterior works, for instance in the Creation, that the Infinite Being manifests this life in the most intense form, but rather in what theologians call *operationes ad intra,* in that ineffable activity of which the end is the perpetual generation of the Son and the unceasing procession of the Holy Ghost. This is pre-eminently His essential, eternal work.

Consider Our Lord's life on earth, a perfect realisation of the divine plan. Thirty years of recollection and solitude, then forty days of penance and retreat, the prelude to His short public career. How many times too during His apostolic journeys do w'e not see Him withdraw into the mountains or the desert to pray, *He retired- into the desert and prayed,* [1] or pass the night in prayer, *He passed the whole night in the prayer of God ?* [2] We have a still more striking example : Martha desires Our Lord to condemn the so-called idleness of her sister and thus to declare the superiority of the life of action ; the answer of Jesus, *Mary hath chosen the better part,*[3] establishes the pre-eminence of the interior life. What else are we to conclude from this but that it is an example given to make us understand the superiority of the life of prayer over the life of action.

After the Master the Apostles, faithful to His example, reserve for themselves first of all the duty of prayer, and

1. Secedebat in desertum et orabat (Luc., V, ıó).
2. Pernoctans in oratione Dei (Luc., VI, 12).
3. Maria optimam partem elegit (Luc., X, 42).

next that of the ministry, the preaching of the gospel, leaving to the deacons more exterior duties : *We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry oj the word.*1

In their turn Popes, holy Doctors of the Church, and theologians assert that the interior life is in itself superior to the life of action.

Some years ago a woman of faith, of virtue and of great strength of mind, superior-general of one of the most important teaching congregations in France, was invited by her ecclesiastical superior to consent to the secularisation of her nuns. Should she sacrifice the religious life in order to continue the work of teaching, or give up the one to preserve the other ? Much perplexed, and not seeing how to find out the Will of God, she set out privately for Rome, was granted an audience with Leo XIII, and explained her doubts and the pressure that was being brought to bear on her in favour of the active work of her order.

The venerable Pontiff after a few moments of reflexion gave this definitive answer: *"Before everything, before any kind of work,* guard the religious life of those of your daughters who have really the spirit of their holy vocation and the love of the life of prayer. If you are not able to preserve both that and good works, God will know how to raise up in France other workers if necessary. As for you, by your interior life, especially by your prayers, and your sacrifice, you will be more useful to France by remaining a true religious, though exiled from her, than by remaining in your native land deprived of the treasures of your consecration to God."

In a letter addressed to a great institution, exclusively devoted to teaching, Saint Pius X declared his mind clearly in the following words :

IT> *learn that an opinion is being spread to the effect that you ought to put in the front rank the education of your pupils and your religious profession only in the second place :i.*

i. Nos vero orationi et ministerio verbi instantes erimus (Acts, VI, 4).

this, it is said, is required by the spirit and the needs of our day. It is altogether against our wish *that such an opinion should have any weight with you, or with any religious insitution, which like yours has e-ducation as its object. Let it then be taken as quite settled, as far as you are concerned, that the religious life far excels the common life, and that if you have grave obligations to your neighbour in your duty of teaching, still more important are the obligations which bind you to God.* [1] But the whole reason for the religious life is the acquiring the interior of life.

"The contemplative life," says the Angelic Doctor, "is by its nature better and more effective than the active life." [2]

St. Bonaventure multiplies comparatives to show the excellence of this interior life: *Vita sublimior, securior, opulentior, suavior, stabilior.* [3]

Vita sublimior.

The active life keeps us occupied and distracted, the contemplative life introduces us to the region of the highest truth without drawing our attention away from the very principle of all life. *Principium quod Deus est quaeritur.* Being more sublime it has a much more extensive horizon and held of action: "Martha by bodily toil in one place was busy about a few things, Mary by her charity in many

1. Omnino nolumus apud vos caeterosque vestri similes, quorum religiosum munus est erudire adolescentulos, ea, quam pervulgari audimus, quidquam valeat opinio, institutioni puerili primas vobis dandas esse religiosae professioni secundas, idque aetatis hujus ingenio et necessitatibus postulari . . . Itaque in causa vestra illud maneat religiosae vitae genus longe communi vitae praestare; atque si magno obstricti estis erga proximos officio docendi, multo majora esse vincula quibus Deo obligamini (St. Pius X).

To give up for a time the religious habit to keep a school going is not here blamed by Saint Pius X, provided that every means is taken to preserve the religious spirit in all things.

2. Vita contemplativa simpliciter melior est . . . et potior quam activa.

3. A life that is more sublime, more free from care, richer, pleasanter, more lasting.

places accomplished many things. For she in the contemplation and the love of God beholds everything, she devotes herself to everything, she understands and takes in everything. So that in comparison with Mary, Martha may be said to worry over few things." [1]

Vita securior.

There is less danger in this interior life. In a life almost wholly given to action the soul is excited, grows feverish, scatters its energies, and as a result becomes weak. It has three defects: *sollicita es* (thou art anxious [2]), worries of mind *[sollicitudines in cogitatu)*; *turbaris* (thou art troubled), troubles that arouse the passions *(turbationes in affectui)*; finally, *erga piurina* (about many things), occupations are multiplied, whence arises a divided effort in our actions *(divisiones in actu).*—One thing alone on the contrary is laid down as necessary for the interior life: union with God: *One thing is necessary.* The rest is and can only be secondary, something accomplished solely by virtue of this union, and in order to strengthen it the more.

Vita opulentior.

With contemplation we possess everything, *All good things came to me together with her.*[3] This is the most excellent choice of all: She *hath chosen the better part.*[4] All merits abound in the life of contemplation. Why? Because it increases at the same time the energy of the will and the degree of sanctifying grace in the soul, and makes the soul act from a principle of charity.

1. Martha in uno loco corpore laborabat circa aliqua, Maria in multis locis caritate circa multa. In Dei enim contemplatione et amore videt omnia; dilatatur ad omnia, comprehendit et complectitur omnia, ita ut ejus comparatione, Martha sollicita dici possit circa pauca (Richard of St. Victor in Cant. 8).
2. Martha, Martha, sollicita es et turbaris erga plurima; porro unum est necessarium (Luc., X, 41, 42).
3. Venerunt mihi omnia bona pariter cum illa (Sap., VII, 11).
4. Optimam partem elegit (Luc., X, 42).

Vita suavior.

The soul that is truly interior abandons itself to the good pleasure of God, accepts with the same patience of heart agreeable as well as disagreeable things, and will go even so far as to be joyful in affliction, and happy to carry the cross.

Vita stabilior.

However intense it may be, the active life has its end here below; preaching, teaching, good works of all sorts, all end on the threshold of eternity. The interior life on the contrary will never cease: *Which shall not be taken away from her.* Through this life our stay here below becomes a gradual ascent to the world of light, an ascent which death comes to render incomparably more glorious and more rapid.

To sum up the excellent qualities of the interior life we may apply to it these words of St. Bernard: "In this life man lives more purely, falls more rarely, recovers more promptly, advances more surely, receives more graces, reposes more serenely, dies more calmly, is more quickly cleansed and gains a greater recompense." 1

2. Good works should be the overflow of the interior Life.

Be ye therefore perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt., V, 48). With all due proportion the nature of Divine action ought to be the criterion and the rule of both our interior and exterior life.

Now we already know that it is the nature of God to give, and it is a matter of experience that here below He bestows His benefits in profusion on all creatures and morei.

i. Haec vita sancta, pura et immaculata, in qua homo vivit purius, cadit rarius, surgit velocius, incedit cautius, irrogatur frequentius, quiescit securius, moritur fiducius, purgatur citius, praemiatur copiosius (St. Bernard, Hom. *Simile est . . . hom. neg).*

especially on human beings. Thus for thousands, if not millions of centuries, the whole universe has been the object of this never failing prodigality, this unceasing shower of benefits.

God however is nothing the poorer and this inexhaustible generosity can never in the slightest degree lessen His infinite resources.

For man God does more than grant him exterior goods. He sends him His Word. But here again in this act of supreme generosity, which is nothing else than the gift of Himself, God abandons none of the integrity of His nature.

Though He gives us His Son, He keeps Him always in Himself. " Take as an example the Sovereign Father of all things, sending us His Word and at the same time keeping Him for Himself." [1]

By means of the sacraments and especially by the Blessed Eucharist Our Lord comes to enrich us with His graces. He pours them forth on us without stint, for He too is an ocean without limits, the fullness of which flows over us, without ever being exhausted :

Of His fullness we all have received,..[2]

Thus we ought to be to some extent apostolic men who undertake the noble task of sanctifying others : " Your word is your consideration ; if it go forth from you let it still remain. [3]" Our word is the interior spirit which grace has formed in our souls. Let this spirit enliven all the manifestations of our zeal ; and although it is spent without ceasing for the benefit of our neighbour, let it also be renewed unremittingly by the means which Our Lord offers us for this purpose. Our interior life ought to be the branch filled with vigorous sap, of which our works are but the flowers.

The soul of an apostle ! It ought to be flooded first of all with light and inflamed with love, so that reflecting this light and this heat it may in turn enlighten and inflame

1. Sume exemplum de summo omnium Parente Verbum suum emittente et retinente (St. Bernard, III, *de Consid.* c. III).
2. De plenitudine ejus nos omnes accepimus (Joan., I, 16).
3. Verbum tuum consideratio tua, quae si procedit, non recedat (S. Bernard, ib.J.

other souls. *That which we have seen and heard, we declare unto you.*[1] "Their lips will pour forth into the hearts of men the abundance of heavenly sweetness," says St. Gregory.

We can now deduce this principle:

THE LIFE OF ACTION OUGHT TO FLOW FROM THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE, INTERPRET IT, AND EXTEND IT OUTWARDLY, WHILE BEING DETACHED FROM IT AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.

The Fathers and Doctors of the Church vie with one another in proclaiming this doctrine.

"Before allowing his tongue to speak," says St. Augustine, "the apostle ought to raise his thirsting soul to God, and then give forth what he has drunk in, and pour forth what he has been filled with."[2]

"We must receive before we can give," says the Pseudo-Denys,[3] "and the higher angels transmit to the lower ones only the light of which they have received the fullness. The Creator has established this order with regard to things divine; the one who has the mission to distribute them must share in them first and fill himself first of all abundantly with the graces that God wishes to grant to souls through his agency. Then and only then will he be allowed to share them with others."

Everyone knows that saying of St. Bernard to the apostle: "If thou art wise, thou wilt be a reservoir and not a channel." *Si sapis, concham te exhibebis, non canalem.*[4] The channel lets the water run off without holding a drop. The reservoir on the contrary is first filled and then without getting empty pours forth its overflow on the fields it fertilises, and this is constantly renewed. How numerous are those men devoted to good works who are never anything but channels, and remain dry themselves when they are

1. Quod vidimus, quod audivimus, annuntiamus vobis (I, Joan, i- 3).
2. Priusquam exserat proferentem linguam, ad Deum levet animam sitientem ut eructet quod biberit, vel quod impleverit fundat (St. Augustine, *Doci. christ,* I. IV).
3- Pseudo Dion., *Cael hier.,* c. III.
4. St. Bernard, *Serm.,* i8 in Cant.

striving to produce grace in the hearts of men ! " We have many channels in the Church to-day but very few reservoirs," sorrowfully adds the Abbot of Clairvaux.[1]

Every cause is superior to its effect ; we therefore have need of more perfection to make others perfect than we need for the mere acquirement of our own perfection.[2]

As a mother cannot suckle her child unless she feeds herself, so confessors, spiritual directors, preachers, catechists, professors, must first of all *make their own* and assimilate the substance with which later on they will feed the children of the Church.[3] Divine truth and love are the elements of this substance. The interior life alone gives us divine truth and charity in such a way as to render them really a food capable of producing life in the souls of men.

3. Active works begin and end in the interior Life, and in it find their means.

Of course we speak only of good works that are worthy of the name. For some in our days do not merit the title; many are enterprises organised under the appearance of piety, but with the real object of getting a reputation of very great ability for their initiators, along with the applause of the public ; for the success of these, all means—very often even the least justifiable—are employed if thought necessary.

Other works there are which merit more respect. They aim at good results, the means and the end are above reproach. Still because the organisers had only a wavering faith in the power of the supernatural life to act upon souls, the results in spite of strenuous efforts are futile or nearly so.

1. Canales multos hodie habemus in Ecclesia, conchas vero perpaucas (St. Bernard, *ibid.).*

2. Manifestum est autem majorem perfectionem requiri ad hoc quod aliquis perfectionem aliis tribuat quam ad hoc ut aliquis in se ipso perfectus sit, sicut majus est posse facere aliquem talem quam esse talem et omnis causa potior est suo effectu (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Opusc. de perf.* vit. spir.).

3. Oportet quod praedicator sit imbutus et dulcoratus in se, et post aliis proponat (St. Bonaventure, *Ilius. Eccl.* Serm. 17).

To specify what a good work ought to be let us listen to the words of a man famous in his part of the country for his apostolate, and recall a lesson that I had from him at the beginning of my priestly ministry. I wanted to start a young men's club. After visiting the Catholic clubs of Paris and other French towns, the work at Val-des-bois, and so on, I went to Marseilles to study the young men's clubs of the saintly Father Allemand and the venerable Canon Timon-David. I like to recall the emotion of my heart on hearing as a young priest the words of the latter :

" Bands, theatricals, lantern lectures, the cinema, etc., I do not find fault with all that ; in the beginning I thought they were indispensable myself ; and yet they are only crutches to be employed for lack of something better. But the longer I live, the more my aim and the means thereto become supernaturalised ; for I see more and more clearly that only that work is blessed by Providence which aims at drawing together God and men by means of the interior life.

The band instruments are in the attic long since ; the theatrical properties have become useless ; still the work prospers more than ever. Why ? Because my priests and I have a clearer vision than in the beginning, thank God ! ; and because our faith in the action of Our Lord and His grace has increased a hundredfold.

Take my advice and do not hesitate to aim as high as you can ; you will be astonished at the results. Let me explain : do not merely have as your ideal to give your young men a choice of decent amusements, which will draw them aw'ay from forbidden pleasures and dangerous occasions, nor merely to give them a veneer of Christianity by a routine attendance at Mass or by their reception of the Sacraments in a merely passable way at long intervals. *Launch out into the deep.*[1] Have the ambition of getting some of these young men, no matter w'hat trouble it costs, to take the energetic resolution of living as fervent

I. Due in altum (Luc., V, 4).

Christians, that is to say, to make a practice of morning meditation, a habit of daily Mass if possible, a little spiritual reading, and as a matter of course frequent and fervent communion. Devote all your care to giving this chosen band a great love of Our Lord, of the spirit of prayer, of self-denial, of keeping watch over self; in a word, solid virtues. Develop no less in their souls a hunger for the Blessed Eucharist. Then gradually stir up these young men to influence their companions; train these young apostles to be straightforward, devoted, full of tact, kind, keen, manly; not narrow-minded in their piety, and never under pretext of zeal falling into the mistake of spying on their comrades. Before two years have gone by, come and tell me whether you still need sounding brass or stage scenery to make a goodly capture of fish."

"I understand," I replied, "this minority will be the leaven. But for the others incapable of being raised to this level, for the general body, the young men of various ages, the married men even who will be included in the proposed Club? What about them?"

"Strengthen their faith by a carefully prepared set of lectures, which will take up many of their winter evenings. Your Christians will come away from these talks well enough armed not only to give full and satisfactory answers to their fellow clerks or workmen, but also to resist the more treacherous action of newspapers or books. If you create in these men unshaken convictions, which in case of need they can assert without fear of public opinion, you will already have gained a very creditable result; but you must take them further still, and make them pious with a piety which is true, ardent, assured, enlightened."

"Should I admit everyone from the beginning?"

"In your recruits you do not want numbers so much as quality. Let the growth of your club depend on the influence exercised by the nucleus of apostles, of which Jesus and Mary will be the centre with you as their instrument."

"The premises will be small; should I wait till our funds allow us to do better?"

"Well in the beginning large comfortable rooms may serve as a big drum to advertise and draw attention to the works you are commencing. But, I repeat, if you know how to found your association on the basis of a zealous, honest, apostolic Christian life, the barest minimum in the way of premises wall always be big enough for all the accessories that the ordinary working of the club will require. Then you will soon find out that noise does not do much good and that what is good does not make much noise. You will prove for yourself that the Gospel fully understood lessens the budget of expenses and far from hindering your success will promote it ! But above all *bestir yourself* not so much by working hard rehearsing plays or preparing games, as *by storing up in your soul the life of prayer ;* for be sure of this : the extent to which you first of all live the life of Our Lord, will be the exact measure of your ability to kindle the fire in others."

" In a word you base everything on the interior life ? "

" Yes, all the time ; for thus instead of alloy you are getting pure gold. Besides, speaking from long experience, I know you can apply what I say about clubs for boys to any kind of work : parish, seminary, cathechism, school, clubs, etc. . . . Great is the good done in a large town by a Catholic association living the supernatural life ! It acts like a powerful leaven, and the angels alone can tell how enormously it helps towards the salvation of souls.

Ah ! if the majority of priests, religious and lay people too, who are engaged in good works, if they knew the power of the lever they have at hand, and took as their fulcrum the Heart of Our Lord, and life in union with that Heart, they would transform our country. Yes, they would do so in spite of the efforts of Satan and his followers." li.

i. The zealous Canon who thus spoke to me and of whose conversation I cherish a very precious memory, has developed his ideas in some of his admirable books. Consult : *Méthode de direction des œuvres de jeunesse,* 2nd. *Traite de la confession des enfants et des jeunes gens,* 3rd. *Souvenirs de l'œuvre ou vie et mort de quelques Congréganistes* (Mignard frères, 26, rue Saint-Sulpice, Paris).

4. The interior Life and the active Life are entirely interdependent.

Just as the love of God shows itself by acts of the interior life, so the love of our neighbour manifests itself by works of the exterior life. In consequence the love of God and the love of our neighbour cannot be separated ; it follows that these two kinds of life cannot exist apart.[1]

" Therefore," says Suarez, " there cannot exist any state destined to lead us to perfection in a normal and correct way, which does not share to some extent both in action and contemplation."[2]

The illustrious Jesuit does but comment on the teaching of St. Thomas. " Those who are called to the works of the active life," says the Angelic Doctor, " would be wrong in thinking that this duty dispenses them from the contemplative life. This duty *is merely added to that of contemplation without lessening its necessity.* Thus these two lives instead of excluding each other are combined together, call for each other's help, imply and complete each other. If one of them is to get a larger share of importance than the other it is the contemplative life, which is the more perfect and the more necessary." [3]

Action to be productive has need of contemplation ; and contemplation, when it gets to a certain degree of intensity, pours out some of its excess on our active works ; by contemplation the soul draws directly from the heart of God the graces w'hich it is the business of the active life to distribute.

1. Sicut per contemplationem amandus est Deus, ita per actualem vitam diligendus est proximus, ac per hoc, sic non possumus sine utraque esse vita, sicut et sine utraque dilectione esse nequaquam possumus (St. Isidore, *Different.,* lib. II, XXXIV, n. 135).

2. Concedendum est nullum esse posse vitae studium recte institutum ad perfectionem obtinendam, quod non aliquid de actione et de contemplatione participet (Suarez I, *De relie, tract.,* I I, c. V, n. 5).

3. Cum aliquis a contemplativa vita ad activam vocatur, non fit per modum substractionis, sed per modum additionis (St. Thomas 2a, 2ae, q. 182, a. 1, ad3).

This is the reason why in a saint's soul action and contemplation moulded together in perfect harmony give to his life a marvellous unity. Take St. Bernard for example, the man most given to contemplation and at the same time the most active man of his age. One of his contemporaries has left us this admirable picture of him: "In him contemplation and action were united to such a degree that the saint seemed at the same tune to be wholly devoted to exterior works and still quite absorbed in the presence of God." [1]

Commenting upon this text of Holy Scripture, *Put me as a seal upon thine heart and as a seal upon thine arm*,[2] Father Saint-Jure accurately describes the relations of these two lives with each other. Let us sum up his reflections:

The heart signifies interior life, contemplation. The arm exterior life, activity. The scripture text mentions the heart and the arm to show that the two lives may be joined and agree perfectly in the same person.

The heart is mentioned first, for as an organ it is far more noble and more necessary than the arm. So contemplation is much more excellent and more perfect and merits far more esteem than action.

Night and day the heart keeps on beating; a stoppage even for an instant would at once bring about death. But the arm, though an integral part of the human body, moves only at intervals. Thus we ought at times let our outward works rest, but on the contrary never relax in our application to spiritual things.

The heart gives life and strength to the arm by means of the blood which it sends to it; without this it would be withered up. So too the contemplative life, a life of union with God, thanks to the light from above and the constant assistance that the soul receives from this intimacy with Him, spiritualises exterior occupations and is alone capable

1. Interiori quadam quam ubique ipse circumferebat solitudine fruebatur, totus quodammodo exterius laborabat, et totus interius Deo vacabat (Geoffrey of Auxerre, *Vila S. Bern.,* II, c. v. et l. III).

2. Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, ut signaculum super brachium tuum (Cant., VIII, 6).

of giving them real usefulness along with a supernatural character. Without contemplation all is weak, barren, and full of imperfections.

Man, alas ! only too often separates what God has united ; so that this perfect union is rarely found. It demands besides for its realisation a number of precautions very often neglected : to undertake nothing above one's strength ; to see in everything habitually and simply the Will of God ; not to undertake good works except when it is God's Will and in the exact measure in which He allows us to devote ourselves to them, and with the sole desire of practising charity ; to offer Him our work from the very beginning ; during the course of our labours often to renew our determination by pious thoughts and ardent ejaculations to act only for Him and by Him. For the rest, whatever attention we give to our work, we must keep our souls in peace, and always remain entirely masters of ourselves. As for success, leave it wholly to God and long only to be delivered from all care, in order that we may find ourselves alone with Our Lord. Such is the wise counsel of the masters of the spiritual life to those who want to reach this union.

This perseverance in the interior life, which in the Abbot of Clairvaux was joined to an active apostolate, made a great impression on St. Francis of Sales. " St. Bernard," he remarks, " lost not a whit of the progress which he washed to make in holy love . . . He changed his dwelling place, but his heart did not change, nor the love of his heart, nor the object of his love . . . he did not change to suit every affair of business or every conversation, like the chameleon which takes the colour of the place he happens to be in ; but he remained always united to God, always white in purity, always ruddy with charity and always full of humility."[1]

At times our duties will be multiplied to such an extent that they will take up all our energies without our being able to get rid of our burden or even lighten it. The consequence may be that we may lose for a time our *delight in this union with God* ; but the union itself will suffer by

I. *Spirit of St. Francis of Sales,* part. 17, chap. II.

such loss only if we allow it to do so. If this state is prolonged, WE MUST SUFFER IT, BEWAIL IT, AND FEAR ABOVE all to GET used το it. Man is weak and inconstant ; if he neglects his spiritual life, he soon loses his taste for it ; absorbed by material cares, in the end he finds pleasure in them. On the other hand if the interior spirit gives signs of its latent vitality by sighs and groanings, these constant wailings, arising from a *wound which refuses to close even in the midst of intense activity,* make up all the merit of our sacrificed contemplation ; or rather the soul realises the admirable and productive union of the active and the interior life. Urged by this thirst for the interior life, which it is unable to slake at leisure, it returns with ardour, as soon as it can, to the life of meditation. Our Lord will always set aside for it a few moments of colloquy ; but He requires us to be faithful to these opportunities and allows the soul *to make up by fervour* for the brevity of these happy moments.

St. Thomas admirably sums up this doctrine in a passage, of which every word should be pondered : " Contemplative life is in itself more meritorious than active life. Nevertheless a man may happen to gain more merit by performing some exterior act : if for instance on account of the abundance of the divine love, and in order to fulfil the Will of God, and for His glory', a man endures for a time the deprivation of the sweetness of divine contemplation."[1]

Notice the importance of the conditions that the holy Doctor lays down for action to become more meritorious than contemplation :

The inner spring which drives the soul to action is the overflowing of its charity ; *on account of the abundance of the divine love.* Therefore, it is not a matter of excitement, or of caprice, or of getting away from oneself.i.

i. Vita contemplativa ex genere suo majoris est meriti quam vita activa. Potest nihilominus accidere ut aliquis plus mereatur aliquid externum agendo : puta si propter abundantiam divini amoris, ut ejus voluntas impleatur, propter ipsius gloriam, interdum sustinet a dulcedine divinae contemplationis ad tempus separari (2a, 2ae, q. 182, a. 2).

Indeed the soul suffers, *sustinet,* on being deprived of the sweetness of divine contemplation.[1] *Interdum:* thus it sacrifices a part of the time reserved for prayer, but only for the present; for a purpose entirely supernatural, *to fulfil the Will of God, for His glory.*

The ways of God are marked with wisdom and goodness. How wonderfully He guides the soul by means of the interior life! This deep sorrow at having to devote so much time to the works of God and so little to the God of works, this sorrow felt in the midst of the action and still generously offered up, has its consolation. Thanks to this pain all dangers of dissipation, self-love, natural affection disappear. Far from injuring our freedom of mind and activity this disposition of soul gives them a more deliberate character. It is the practical way to keep in the presence of God, for the soul finds in the grace of the actual moment the living Saviour, who presents Himself to her under the guise of the work to be done. Jesus works with her and supports her. How many people engaged in an active life, will owe to this salutary[2] suffering accepted in the right spirit, to the persistent but unsatisfied desire to visit the Blessed Sacrament, to those almost incessant spiritual communions—how many will owe to all this the splendid results of their work, the salvation of their souls, and their progress in virtue!

5. Excellence of this union.

The union of the two lives, contemplative and active, constitutes the true apostolate, "the chief duty of Christianity," says St. Thomas: *Principalissimum officium.*[2]

1. Since this sweetness dwells in the higher region of the soul it does not always do away with aridity; it transcends all feeling: *exsuperat omnem sensum.* The logic of pure faith, cold and dry in itself, is sufficient to allow the will to inflame the heart with a supernatural fire, with the help of grace.

St. Jane Chantal, one of those souls most tried in mental prayer, on her death bed left to her daughters as her last will the principle of faith on which she had based her life: "The greatest happiness here below is to be able to converse with God."

2. 3, q. 67, a. 2, ad 1.

This apostolate implies souls capable of being fired with enthusiasm for an idea, of devoting themselves to the triumph of a principle. When the realisation of this ideal is made supernatural by the interior spirit ; when our zeal, in its object, its centre, and its means, is quickened by the spirit of Christ, then we shall have the life which is in itself *the most perfect, the life above all lives,* since theologians prefer it even to simple contemplation : *Praefertur simplici contemplationi.* [1]

The apostolate of the man of prayer is the word of the Gospel conquering with the mandate of God ; it is the zeal for souls, the spreading of conversions : *Missio a Deo, zelus animarum, fructificatio auditorum.*[2] It is the vapour rising from faith, with health-giving exhalations : *Zelus id est vapor fidei.*[3]

The apostolate of the saint is seed sown in the world. The apostle casts into souls the wheat of God. It is a blazing fire of love that consumes the earth, the conflagration of Pentecost spread without hindrance throughout the nations: *I am come to cast fire on the earth.* [4][5]

The sublimity of this ministry consists in this, that it provides for the salvation of others without danger to the apostle himself : *sublimatur ad hoc ut aliis provideat.* To transmit divine truth to human minds ! Is not this a ministry worthy of angels ?

To contemplate the truth is good ; but to hand it on to others is better. To reflect the light is something more than simply to receive it. To give light is better than to shine under the bushel. By contemplation the soul feeds itself ; by the apostolate it gives of itself to others : *Sicut majus est illuminare quam lucere solum, its majus est contemplata aliis tradere quam solum contemplare*[3]

Contemplata aliis tradere : the life of prayer remains *the source* of this ideal of the apostolate ; such obviously is the meaning of St. Thomas.

1. St. Thomas. 2. St. Bonaventure.
3. St. Ambrose.
4. Ignem veni mittere in terram (Luc., XII, 49).
5. St. Thomas, 2a, 2ae, q. 188, a. 6.

This passage, as well as the words quoted at the end of the previous chapter, utterly condemns "Americanism," the partisans of which dream of a mixed life, in which action would strangle contemplation.

The text of St. Thomas implies two things: 1° that the soul is already habitually living the life of prayer, and doing so with sufficient intensity not to have to draw on anything but its surplus for others; 2° that action must not supersede the life of prayer; and that the soul while spending itself must be so well trained in keeping watch over its heart, that it may run no serious risk of withdrawing its activity from the influence of Our Lord.

The beautiful words of the Rev. Father Matthew Crawley, the apostle of the enthroning of the Sacred Heart in the family, express accurately the thought of St. Thomas: "The apostle is a chalice full to the brim with the life of Jesus Christ, the overflow of which is poured out upon souls."

It is this mingling of action with all its outpouring of zeal, and of contemplation with its sublime flights that has produced the great saints: St. Denis, St. Martin, St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis Xavier, St. Philip Neri, St. Alphonsus, all of them just as ardent contemplatives as they were mighty apostles.

Interior life and active life! Holiness in good works! Powerful union, productive union! What miracles of conversion you bring about!

O God, grant to Thy Church numerous apostles; but kindle in their hearts, already consumed with the desire of giving themselves, a burning thirst for the life of prayer. Grant to Thy workers this contemplative activity, this active contemplation; then will Thy work be accomplished; Thy workers of the Gospel will win those victories which Thou didst foretell to them before Thy glorious Ascension.

PART THREE

THE ACTIVE LIFE IS FULL OF DANGER, UNLESS UNITED WITH THE INTERIOR LIFE AND WITH PROGRESS IN VIRTUE

1. Active works, a means of sanctification for interior souls, become for others a danger to their salvation.

A means of sanctification. Our Lord demands explicitly from all those whom He associates with His apostolate, not only that they *persevere in* their virtue, but that they *make progress* in it. The proof will be found in every page of the Epistles of St. Paul to Titus and Timothy, and in the appeals made in the Apocalypse to the Bishops of Asia.

At the same time we have proved in the beginning of this book that good works are willed by God. Therefore to see in good works taken by themselves an obstacle to salvation, and to affirm that, although *they flow from the divine will,* they *necessarily* slow down our advance to perfection, would be an insult, a blasphemy against the wisdom and goodness of divine Providence.

Hence arises an unavoidable dilemna : either the apostolate, whatever shape it may take, if it be the will of God, not only does not possess in itself the power of weakening the atmosphere of solid virtue in which a soul anxious for salvation and spiritual progress must live, but it actually always provides the apostle with a *means of salvation,* if his apostolic work keeps within the necessary conditions.

Or else the person chosen by God to work with Him and who in consequence is bound to answer the divine call, will have the right to plead his activity, the labour

and the worries spent on behalf of the work commanded, as lawful excuses for his neglect to sanctify himself.

Now as a consequence of the economy of the divine plan God owes it to Himself to grant His chosen apostle the graces necessary to realise the union of absorbing occupations, not only with the assurance of salvation, but also with the acquisition of virtues leading on to sanctity itself.

The help which He granted to St. Bernard and to St. Francis Xavier, He owes in due measure to the most unpretending preacher of the Gospel, to the humblest teaching brother, to the most obscure hospital sister. Such aid is a veritable debt of the Heart of God owed by Him to His chosen instrument. Let us not fear to repeat it. Every apostle, if he fulfils the necessary conditions, should have *absolute confidence in his strict right* to the graces he requires. His work gives him a mortgage on the infinite treasure of divine assistance.

" He who devotes himself to works of charity," says Alvarez de Paz, " must not imagine that they will close the door of contemplation in his face, or make him less capable of devoting himself to meditation. He must on the contrary hold it as certain that they help him towards it in a wonderful way. Not only do reason and the authority of the Fathers teach us this truth, but also daily experience ; for we may see certain souls who devote themselves to works of charity towards their neighbour, like hearing confessions, preaching, teaching catechism, visiting the sick, etc., raised by God to such a high degree of contemplation, that we may justly compare them to the anchorites of old." 1

By this expression, " degree of contemplation," the eminent Jesuit, like the other masters of the spiritual life, means the gift of the spirit of prayer, which is the mark of the overflow of charity in the soul.

The sacrifices exacted from us by active works of charity draw so much supernatural treasure from the glory they give to God by the sanctification of souls and acquire from this such abundant merit that, if he wishes, the man devoted to active life may raise himself every day a degree

1. Vol. III, livTV.

higher in charity and union with God, that is to say in sanctity.

No doubt in certain cases, where there is a grave and proximate danger of sin, especially against faith or chastity, God absolutely wills a man to give up works of charity. But with this exception He supplies His workers, through the interior life, with the means of becoming immune to danger and of making progress in virtue. Let us however define in what this progress consists. A paradox uttered by the wise and ready-witted St. Teresa will enable me to fix my meaning: "Since I have been Prioress, burdened with much work and obliged to travel frequently, I commit many more faults. And yet, since I struggle generously and work only for God, I feel that I am drawing nearer and nearer to Him." Her weakness shows itself more than it did in the peace and silence of the cloister. The saint is aware of this, but without worrying over it. The completely supernatural generoisity of her devotion to duty, and her greatly increased efforts in the spiritual combat, enable her to return to win many victories; these fully compensate for the faults of a weakness which always existed but formerly only in a latent state. "Our union with God," says St. John of the Cross, "consists in the union of our will with His and is measured entirely by His Will." Instead of taking the mistaken view of the spiritual life which sees no possibility of progress in union with God except in calm and solitude, St. Teresa judged that it rather dwells in an activity really imposed by God; and carried out under the conditions prescribed by Him, which by increasing her spirit of sacrifice, her humility, her self-denial, her ardour, and her devotedness to the kingdom of God, helped to increase the intimate union of her soul with Our Lord living in her, giving life to her work and leading her thus to sanctity.

Sanctity in fact consists above all in charity; and an apostolic work worthy of the name is simply charity in action. *Probatio amoris,* says St. Gregory, *exhibitio est operis.* Love is proved by works of self-denial, and God requires from His workers this proof of devotion.

" Feed my lambs, feed my sheep," is the kind of charity that Our Lord demands from His apostle as a proof of the sincerity of his repeated protestations of love.

St. Francis of Assisi believed that he could not be the friend of Our Lord, if his charity was not devoted to the salvation of souls. *Non se amicum Christi reputabat, nisi animas foveret quas ille redemit*[1]

If Our Lord considers all works of mercy, even corporal, as done unto Himself, it is because He sees in each one of them a reflexion of this same charity,[2] which inspires the missionary or sustains the anchorite in the hardships, the struggles and the prayers of the desert.

The active life is employed in works of devotion to the service of others. It treads the paths of sacrifice following Jesus, who is worker and pastor, missionary, miracle-worker, healer and curer of all, the tender and tireless helper of all the needy here below.

The active life remembers and is sustained by these words of the Master: *I am in the midst of you as he that serveth. The son of man is not come to be ministered unto but to minister*[3]; it goes out into the byways of human misery speaking the word that enlightens, sowing all around a harvest of graces which grows up in benefits of all kinds.

Thanks to the clear vision of its faith, thanks to the intuitions of its love, it discovers in the lowest of the wretched, in the most pitiful of sufferers, God naked on the cross, sorrowful, despised by all, the great leper, the mysterious condemned one, whom eternal justice proceeds against, pursues and crushes with its blows, the man of sorrows, whom Isaias saw standing in the dreadful wealth of His wounds, in the tragic purple of His blood, so wan, so lacerated by the nails and by the whips of the scourging, that He writhed like a worm that is crushed.

1. St. Bonaventure, *Vit. S. Franc.*, c. IX.
2. As long as you did it to one of these, my least brethren, you did it to me (Matth., XXV, 40).
3. Ego autem in medio vestrum sum sicut qui ministrat (Luc., XXII, 27). Filius hominis non venit ministrari, sed ministrare (Matth., XX, 28).

Thus we have seen Him and have not recognised Him, says the prophet. 1

But thou, O active life, dost recognise Him ; and on bended knees with tears in thine eyes thou dost serve Him in the poor.

The active life improves mankind ; by enriching the world with its generosity, its work, its toils, its tears, it sows merits for heaven.

It is a holy life rewarded by God, for He grants it the paradise promised for a cup of water given to the poor, just as well as for the learned tomes of the doctor, or the labours of the apostle. On the last day he will canonise all the works of charity before the face of heaven and earth together.

A menace to salvation. How many times alas ! in private retreats that I have directed have I not noticed that works of charity which ought to have been for their organisers a *means of progress* had become forces that undermined the whole structure of their spiritual life.

A man very active in good works, invited by me at the beginning of a retreat to search into his conscience and find the predominant cause of his wretched state, passed accurate judgment on himself by making this reply, which may seem at first sight incomprehensible : "*It is my self-sacrifice which has ruined me !* My natural disposition made it a joy for me to spend myself in the service of others. Aided by the apparent success of my enterprises Satan has contrived for many years to make use of everything to delude me, to stir me up to furious activity, to make me loathe all interior prayer and finally to drag me over the edge of the abyss."

This abnormal, not to say monstrous state of mind, can be easily explained. The worker for God, carried away by the pleasure of giving free rein to his natural activity, had allowed the divine life in himself to fade out, and thus lost the divine heat which had been stored up within him andi.

i. Et vidimus eum et non erat aspectus, et desideravimus eum, despectum et novissimum virorum, virum dolorum et scientem infirmitatem ; et quasi abconditus vultus ejus et despectus, unde nec reputavimus eum (Is., LIII, 2, 3).

had made his apostolate fruitful and had protected his soul against the numbing cold of mere human motives. He had worked indeed, but far from the rays of the life-giving sun. "Great strength, most rapid speed, but off the track." [1] At the same time labours holy in themselves had turned against the apostle, like a weapon dangerous to wield, a two-edged sword which wounds the man who does not know how to use it.

It was against such a danger that St. Bernard warned Pope Eugenius III, when he wrote to him: "I am afraid that in the midst of your countless occupations, you may lose hope of ever getting to the end of them and allow your heart to harden. It would be far more prudent for you to withdraw *from these occupations* if only for a time, rather than to allow them to become your master, and little by little drag you where you do not want to go. Where is that you will perhaps ask. *To indifference of heart.*

"Behold the depths to which you may be dragged by these *accursed tasks,* 'hae occupationes maledictae,' if you keep on as you have begun giving yourself up to them entirely, reserving nothing for yourself of yourself." [2]

Is there anything more noble, more sacred than the government of the Church? Is there anything more useful for the glory of God and the good of souls? And yet, "accursed tasks," St. Bernard calls them, if they are going to hinder the interior life of the one who undertakes them,

What a strong expression, *accursed tasks!* It calls for a whole book, so much does it alarm and force one to think; and it might call forth a protest, did it not flow from the pen of a Doctor of the Church, St. Bernard.

2. The active worker without the interior Life.

We may sum such a one up in a word: perhaps he is not yet tepid, but he is doomed to become so. Now to be tepid,

1. Magnae vires et cursus celerrimus, sed praeter viam (S. Augustine, *in Psalm.* XXXI).

2. En quo trahere te possunt hae occupationes maledictae, si tamen pergis ut coepisti, ita te dare totum illis, nil tui tibi relinquens St. Bernard, *De Consid.,* l. II).

not from spiritual dryness or weakness but *willingly, is to yield consent to habitual levity and carelessness, or at least not to resist them ; it is to come to terms with deliberate venial sin, and by that very fact to rob the soul of its assurance of eternal salvation,* disposing it and even leading it to mortal sin.[1] Such is the doctrine of St. Alphonsus on tepidity, described so vividly by his disciple, Father Desurmont.[2]

Now how is it that without interior life the active worker inevitably slides into tepidity ? Inevitably, I say, and in proof I have only to quote these words of a missionary bishop to his priests, words the more terrifying for their truth because they flow from a heart consumed with zeal for works of charity and from a mind directly opposed to anything that smacks of quietism. " You must be fully convinced of this," said Cardinal Lavigerie, " that for an apostle there is no half way between complete holiness, at least faithfully and courageously desired and sought after, and absolute perversion."

First let us recall the seed of corruption that concupiscence keeps alive in our nature, and the war without truce that our enemies wage against us, within as well as without, and the dangers which threaten us on all sides.

Next let us try to imagine what becomes of a soul

1. From the teaching of St. Thomas on habits we gather that when a soul performs an act good in itself, but without the degree of fervour that God has a right to expect from the state of grace in which it is, this act tends in a sense to lessen the degree of charity it possesses. The texts : " Cursed be he who does the work of God with negligence," and " Because thou art lukewarm ... I begin to vomit thee from my mouth," are thus explained.

In addition each venial sin although it does not lessen the state of grace still lessens the soul's fervour and thus disposes it to mortal sin. Now without a serious interior life venial sin will abound and there will be many venial sins that are not even recognised as such, although they will be recorded against the lax and careless soul which has ceased to live the life of *Vigilate et orate.* We thus find in St. Thomas the explanation of the " occupationes maledictae " noted before, and of all the present chapter (Cf. St. Thomas, ra, 2ae. q. LII, a. 3).

2. See the note on tepidity, Part 1, no. 3, sixth truth. Cf. *Le retour continuel à Dieu.*

which applies itself to apostolic work without being sufficiently forewarned and forearmed against its dangers.

Fr. or Mr. So and So feels within himself the growing desire to consecrate himself to works of charity. He has no experience whatever. But his liking for the apostolate gives us the right to suppose that he has ardour and some impetuosity of character, to imagine him delighting in action and in being in the thick of a fight. We suppose him to be exemplary in conduct, full of piety and devotion, but a piety rather of the feelings than of the will, and a devotion which is not the glow from a soul determined to seek only the Will of God, but a routine piety, the result of praiseworthy habits. Meditation, if indeed he makes his meditation at all, is a sort of day-dreaming and his spiritual reading an exercise of curiosity without any real influence on his conduct. Perhaps Satan even spurs him on through a delusion of artistic taste, which his deceived soul mistakes for interior life, to enjoy reading treatises which deal with the higher and extraordinary paths of union with God, a type of reading which fills him with enthusiasm. Upon the whole there is little if any true interior life in this soul, which possesses, I grant, many good habits, many natural good qualities and a certain desire, loyal but much too vague, to remain faithful to God.

Here then we have our apostle, filled with the desire of devoting himself to good works and about to apply himself to this ministry which is completely new to him. Soon by reason of circumstances produced by these new occupations (as anyone accustomed to this kind of work will understand), soon, I say, countless occasions will arise to bring him to lead a life quite exterior, countless allurements for his silly curiosity, countless occasions of sin, from which up to then he had in all probability been protected in some measure by the peaceful atmosphere of the family circle, the seminary, the community, the novitiate, or at least by the guidance of a wise director.

Not only is there an increasing dissipation or a dangerous curiosity to find out about everything; not only are there displays of impatience or touchiness, vanity or jealousy,

presumption or dejection, partiality or detraction, but there is also a gradual development of weakness of soul and all the more or less subtle forms of sensuality ; all these will force an unceasing struggle upon this soul so ill-prepared for such fierce and unceasing attacks. Frequent therefore are the wounds it sustains.

Besides, this soul with its superficial piety, never even dreams of making any resistance, since it is *already captivated by the too natural satisfaction of devoting its activity and its talent to the advancement of such a worthy cause.* Satan too is on the watch, for lie already scents a victim. Far from disturbing this satisfaction, he does all in his power to excite it.

A day comes however when this soul catches a glimpse of its danger ; its angel guardian has spoken, its conscience protests. Now would be the time for such a one to *regain possession of himself,* to examine his state in the calm of a retreat, to take the resolution of energetically following a rule that he will adhere to, even if he has to neglect the work that has become so dear to him. Alas, it is almost too late ! The soul has now enjoyed the pleasure of seeing its efforts crowned with the most encouraging success : " To-morrow, to-morrow ! " it cries, " to-day it is impossible ; I have no time, for I must continue this course of sermons, write that article, organise that committee, rehearse that play, go on that journey, catch up with my correspondence, etc." *How happy he is to reassure himself by means of these excuses.* For the mere thought of facing his conscience has become unbearable for him. The time has come when the father of evil can freely encompass the ruin of a soul that has become such a wiling ally. The ground is prepared. *Since activity has become a passion in his victim, the demon fans it into a fever ;* to forget the tumult of affairs, to recollect himself seems impossible ; the demon inspires him with a horror of doing so ; and in addition takes care to intoxicate his soul with fresh plans which he cleverly colours with the attractive motives of the glory of God, the greater good of souls.

And now this man, a short time ago so full of virtuous habits, goes from weakness to weakness and is reaching a

place where he will put his foot on an incline too steep for him to be able to keep himself from falling. In the depths of his heart he is miserable and has a vague feeling that all this agitation is not according to the Heart of God, so *he plunges more wildly than ever into the whirlpool of work to drown his remorse.* Faults are piled up to a fatal degree. What formerly troubled his upright conscience is now despised as an empty scruple. He is fond of proclaiming that a man must move with the times, fight the enemy on equal terms; and so he is loud in praise of active virtues, having nothing but contempt for what he disdainfully calls the piety of a bygone day. His undertakings, besides, prosper more than ever, people praise them loudly. Each day sees new successes. "God Blesses our Work," says the deluded soul, over whom to-morrow the angels of heaven will be weeping on account of a mortal sin.

How did this soul fall into such a lamentable state? Through INEXPERIENCE, PRESUMPTION, VANITY, CARELESSNESS, cowardice. Without reflecting on its inadequate spiritual equipment it plunged at random into the midst of dangers. Its store of interior life exhausted, it found itself in the position of the incautious swimmer who, having no longer the strength to struggle against the current, is swept away to the abyss.

Let us pause a moment to measure the length of the road traversed and to estimate the depth of the fall. Let us proceed methodically and count the stages.

First stage. The soul has first of all gradually lost (if she ever had them) the *clearness* and *strength* of her convictions about the supernatural life, the supernatural world and the economy of the plan and of the action of Our Lord with regard to the relation between the interior life of the apostle and his work. She no longer sees these works except through a delusive mirage. In a subtle way vanity serves as a pedestal for his sham good intentions; "I can't help it. God has endowed me with the gift of oratory, thanks be to His goodness," was the reply made to those who were flattering him by a certain preacher swollen with vanity and self-conceit, and completely given to exterior things. The

glory, and personal interests occupy the foreground. The text, *If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ,*[1] becomes for her a phrase without sense.

Besides ignorance of first principles, the want of a supernatural basis, which is the mark of this stage, has for direct results: dissipation, forgetfulness of the presence of God, giving up ejaculatory prayers and custody of the heart, want of delicacy of conscience and regularity of life. Tepidity is not far off, if it has not already begun.

Second stage. If the apostolic worker is a supernatural man, being a slave of duty and greedy of his time, he will regulate its use and live by rule. He will realise that otherwise he would be living a mere natural life of capricious ease from morning to night.

But if his work has no supernatural basis he will soon know this from sad experience. Since there is no spirit of faith in the use he makes of his time, he gives up his spiritual reading. Or else if he still reads, he no longer studies. It was all very well for the Fathers of the Church to prepare their homily for Sundays. He prefers, unless his vanity is at stake, to speak extempore, and always, as he at least believes, with rare success. He prefers magazines to books; he has no method; he flutters about from one thing to another. He escapes from the law of work, the great law of preservation, of morality and of penance, by wasting his free time and by the extreme pains he takes to provide himself with amusements.

Anything that would interfere with his liberty of behaviour, he considers tiresome and purely theoretical. He has not time enough for all his works and social obligations, or even for what he thinks necessary for his health and his recreation. The devil prompts him: there is really too much time given to exercises of piety, meditation, office, Mass, the work of the ministry; he must cut out something. And invariably he begins by cutting short his meditation, by not making it regularly; and perhaps, alas! he comes little by little to the point of dropping it.

1. Si hominibus placerem, servus Christi non essem (Gal., i, 10).

altogether. Getting up at a fixed hour, the indispensable requisite for remaining faithful to *meditation*, is all the more logically given up, because he goes to bed rather late for various reasons.

Now for a man in the active life giving up meditation is the same as throwing one's weapons away in the presence of the enemy. "Except by a miracle," says St. Alphonsus, "without meditation we will end up in mortal sin." And St. Vincent de Paul: "A man without meditation is no good for anything, he cannot even deny himself in anything; his life is merely the life of an animal." Some authors quote these words of St. Teresa: "Without mental prayer one becomes either a brute or a devil. If you do not make your meditation, you have no need of the devil to cast you into hell; you throw yourself in. On the contrary, give me the greatest sinner, if he makes only a quarter of an hour's meditation every day, he will be converted; if he perseveres he is sure of eternal salvation." The experience of priests or religious devoted to a life of activity is enough to prove that an apostolic worker will inevitably fall into tepidity of the will, when under pretext of work or fatigue or through distaste, idleness, or some delusion, he cuts down, *without necessity*, his meditation to ten or fifteen minutes, instead of binding himself to half an hour's serious meditation, so as to draw from it the impulse and the strength necessary for the day's work.

In this stage it is no longer a matter of avoiding imperfections; there is a swarm of venial sins. The ever growing impossibility of watching over his heart hides the greater number of these faults from his conscience; *he has put himself in the position of no longer being able to see.* How will he strive against what he no longer regards as defects? His lingering disease is already far advanced. The consequence of this second stage is marked by *the giving up* of meditation *and of all* regularity of life.

Third stage, of which the symptom is *negligence in the recitation of the* breviary. The prayer of the Church which ought to give the soldier of Christ the joy and strength to raise himself up from time to time, to take with God

a flight high above the visible world, has become a wearisome task. The liturgical life, source of light, of joy, of strength, of merits and graces for himself and for the faithful, is now only a disagreeable duty, grudgingly discharged. The interior virtue of religion is more than affected by the disease. The fever for active work has caused it to dry' up. The soul sees the worship of God only in so far as it can be bound up with striking exterior display. The obscure and personal but heartfelt sacrifice of praise, supplication, thanksgiving, reparation, no longer means anything to such a man. Formerly during the recitation of his vocal prayers he used to say with legitimate pride, as if he too wished to rival a choir of monks, *I too shall sing to Thee in the sight of the angels.* [1] The sanctuary of this soul once filled with the sweet odour of the liturgical life, has become a public square where noise and disorder reign. Exaggerated care for his work and habitual dissipation is the cause of multiplying his distractions tenfold ; to these besides he offers less and less resistance. *The Lord is not in noise.*[2] Genuine prayer is not to be found in this soul. He prays in haste, with unjustifiable interruptions, carelessness, sleepiness, delays, putting it off till the last moment at the risk of falling asleep, and perhaps skipping parts of the office here and there ; all this transforms what should be medicine for the soul into poison, and the offering of praise into a litany of sms, and sins which perhaps may end up by being more than venial.

Fourth stage. Everything links up. Deep calls to deep. Now it is the sacraments ! They are received or administered as something worthy of respect no doubt, but there is no longer any sense of the life-giving power contained in them. The presence of Jesus in the tabernacle or in the holy tribunal of penance is no longer capable of making the strings of faith vibrate to the innermost parts of his soul. The Mass itself, the sacrifice of Calvary, has become a closed garden. Of course, the soul is still far from sacrilege, we are willing to believe. But it no longer feels the warmth

1. In conspectu angelorum psallam tibi (Ps. XIII, 6).
2. Non in commotione Dominus (i Reg., XIX, 2).

of the Precious Blood. Its consecrations remain cold and its communions tepid, careless, superficial. Familiarity without respect ; routine and perhaps repugnance are lying in wait for him already.

Thus deformed the apostle lives outside Our Lord, and no longer enjoys those confidential words which Jesus speaks only to His true friends.

And yet at long intervals the Heavenly Friend sends to him a feeling of remorse, a light, an appeal. He waits, He knocks, He asks to be let in : " Come to me, poor wounded soul, come, I will heal thee : *Venite ad me omnes ... et ego reficiam vos* [1] ; for I am thy salvation : *Salus tua ego sum.*[2] I am come to save that which was lost : *Venit Filius hominis quaerere et salvum facere quod perierat."*[3][4] This voice so gentle, so tender, so discreet, so urgent, brings moments of emotion, of fleeting desires to do better. But the door of the heart is only slightly opened and *Jesus cannot enter* ; these good movements of the tepid soul come to nothing. Grace comes in vain and will turn against the soul ; perhaps even in His mercy, to avoid piling up stores of wrath, Jesus will cease to speak : *Fear Jesus passing by and never returning**

Now let us go further and penetrate even into the interior of this soul whose features we are sketching.

Thoughts play an important part in the supernatural life as well as in the moral and intellectual life. Now what are the thoughts that fill the mind of this apostle and what direction do they take ? Human, earthly, vain, superficial, selfish, they turn more and more to *self* or to creatures, even though they have the appearance of devotion to duty and sacrifice.

This disorder in the mind is accompanied by a corresponding unruliness in the *imagination*. No power of the mind has more need of being kept under control. But he has not the least notion of reining it in ; so, throwing the bridle on its neck, he gives it free rein ; it runs wild and commits all

1. Matt., XI, 28. 2. Ps. XXV, 3.
3. Luc., XIX, 10.
4. Time Jesum transeuntem et non revertentem.

sorts of folly. The gradual dropping of mortification of the eyes permits this crazy faculty of his soul to find a pasturage almost everywhere.

This disorder pursues its course. From the intelligence and the imagination it gets down into the *affections*. The heart is fed with idle fancies. What will become of this dissipated heart which hardly troubles itself about the Kingdom of God within itself and has become unmindful of the joy of converse with Our Lord, of the sublime poetry of the mysteries of religion, of the severe beauty of the liturgy, and of the attractions of the Blessed Eucharist; unmindful in a word of the influence of the supernatural world. Will he become wrapped up in himself? This would be suicide. No! he *must* have affection; no longer finding happiness in God he will love creatures. He is at the mercy of the first occasion for such love. He flings himself into it passionately without troubling himself perhaps about the most sacred vows, or about the highest interests of the Church, or even his own reputation. Let us suppose that the prospect of apostasy would still upset him very deeply, the scandal to souls alarms him less.

No doubt for anyone to go to such extremes is, thank God, a rare exception. But anyone can see that weariness in the service of God, and indulging in forbidden pleasures, may drag the heart down to the worst misfortunes. Starting from the fact that "the sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God,"[1] by necessity we must end up with "He who was reared in the purple has embraced dung."[2] Self-willed delusion, blindness of the mind, hardening of the heart go by regular stages. We must be ready for anything.

To crown his misfortunes, the *will* though not destroyed is reduced to a state of weakness, of effeminacy that makes it almost powerless. Do not ask him to fight energetically; that would be a waste of time. But ask him

1. Animalis homo non intelligit quae sunt spiritus Dei (i Cor., II, 14).

2. Qui nutriebatur in croceis, amplexatus est stercora (Jerem., IV, 5).

to try and make even a small effort and you will get only this despairing reply: *I cannot.* Now in this case to be unable to make an effort means that a man is hastening to dreadful calamity.

A famous agnostic dared to say that he was unable to believe that certain people could be faithful to their vows and obligations, as they were forced by their works to mix freely with the life of the world. "They are walking,' he added, "on a tight rope. Their fall is inevitable." To this insult to God and the Church we must answer unhesitatingly that *these falls can most certainly be avoided if we know how to make use of the precious balancing pole of the interior life: it is only the abandonment of this* infallible *instrument that brings dizziness and the fatal false step into space.*

The famous Jesuit, Father Lallemant, goes back to the primary cause of these disasters when he says: "There are many apostolic men who do nothing purely for God alone. In everything they seek themselves and always secretly join their own interest to the glory of God in their best enterprises. They thus pass their lives in this mingling of nature and grace. At last comes death and *only then do they open their eyes,* see their delusion and tremble at the approach of the formidable judgment of God." 1

Assuredly it is far from my mind to count among those apostles who preach for their own glory', that zealous and energetic missionary, the celebrated Abbé Combalot. But it may not be out of place to quote the words he uttered at the approach of death. The priest said to him after having administered the last sacraments: "Have confidence; you have led an upright priestly life, and your thousands of sermons will plead before God as an exucse for that want of interior life of which you speak." "My sermons!" cried the dying priest, "Oh! I see them now in their proper light! My sermons! Ah! if Our Lord does not mention them first, it is not I that will begin." In the light of

1. *Docl. spirit.*

eternity this venerable priest saw in his best works of zeal, imperfections which alarmed his conscience, and which he attributed to a lack of interior life.

Cardinal Perron at the hour of his death expressed his sorrow at having been more devoted during his life to to improving his mind by science than his will by the exercises of the interior life.[1]

O Jesus, Thou Apostle above all others, has anyone ever spent himself as much as Thou when Thou didst dwell amongst us ? To-day Thou dost give Thyself more generously still by Thy Eucharistic life without leaving Thy Father's bosom. May we never forget that Thou wilt not recognise our labours unless they are inspired by a really supernatural principle deeply rooted in Thine adorable Heart !

3. The interior Life is the basis oî the holiness of the apostolic worker.

Since holiness is nothing else than the interior life carried to the closest union of the human will with the will of God, the soul as a rule, unless by a miracle of grace, does not reach this point until it has gone through all the stages of the purgative and illuminative life by means of continuous and laborious efforts. Notice as a law of the spiritual life that in the process of sanctification the action of God and that of the soul are in inverse proportion to one another, the operations of God playing from day to day a more important part, while the activity of the soul grows less and less.

The activity of God is different in the souls of the perfect from his activity in the souls of beginners. In the latter, being less apparent at first, it chiefly consists in arousing and sustaining vigilance and prayer, thus offering beginners the means of obtaining grace for new efforts. With the perfect, God acts in a fuller way and sometimes only asks a simple consent which will imite the soul to His supreme action.i.

i. P. Lallemant, *Doct. spir.*

The beginner, and even the tepid soul and the sinner, whom God wishes to draw nearer to Himself, feel themselves first of all moved to seek God, then to prove to Him more and more their desire of pleasing Him, and finally to rejoice in all the providential opportunities which permit them to lay aside their self-love and to establish, in its place the reign of Jesus alone. In this case the divine action is limited to promptings and to help.

In the *saint* this action is much more powerful, and much more complete. In the midst of weariness and suffering, steeped in humiliations or crushed by illness, the saint has in fact only to yield to the divine action; without it he would be unable to endure the sufferings which according to the designs of Providence are to bring him to perfection. In him is fully realised the text: *God puts all things under him, that God may be all in all.*[1] He lives so completely in Jesus that he no longer seems to live by himself. Such was the testimony of the apostle concerning himself: *I live now not I, but Christ liveth in me.*[2] It is the spirit of Jesus alone that thinks, decides, acts. No doubt this union is far from reaching the intensity that it will possess in heaven, but this state already reflects the marks of the beatific union.

Is there any need to say that this is far from being the case with the *beginner* or the *tepid* or even with the *fervent*? There is a whole series of means adapted to their state, means which will serve equally one state as well as the other. But the beginner like an apprentice will have hard work, will get on slowly, and after all produce indifferent work. The fervent man already a skilled workman, will carry out his work quickly and well, and with less difficulty will gain more profit.

But whatever class of apostles we have in mind, the intentions of Providence with regard to them remain always the same. God wishes always and for all these souls that their ministry be for them a means of sanctification. But,

1. Deus subjicit sibi omnia, ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus (I Cor., XV, 28).
2. Vivo ego jam non ego, vivit vero in me Christus (Gal., II, 20).

while for the soul that has reached sanctity the apostolate holds no serious danger, does not exhaust her strength and gives her countless means of growing in grace and merit, we have seen with what ease it produces spiritual anemia and as a result a set-back on the road to perfection in souls not closely united with God ; in such souls the liking for meditation, the spirit of sacrifice and especially the habit of the custody of the heart, are but poorly developed.

This habit of vigilance God never refuses to earnest prayer and repeated proofs of fidelity. He bestows it without measure on the generous soul, who by beginning again continually has gradually moulded her faculties and made them supple in responding to inspirations from on high and capable of joyfully accepting contradiction and failure, loss and disappointment.

We shall now consider six principal features of the way in which this interior life, slowly filtering into the soul, establishes it in genuine virtue.

(a) It protects the soul against the dangers of the exterior ministry.

"It is more difficult to live correctly when one has charge of souls, on account of dangers from without."[1] We have spoken of this danger in the foregoing chapter.

The apostle who has no interior spirit is unaware of the dangers arising from the ministry ; he thus resembles an unarmed traveller, passing through a forest infested with brigands. The *true apostle dreads these dangers* and takes precautions against them every day by a serious examination of conscience, which reveals to him his weak points.

If the interior life did nothing more than enable a mani.

i. Difficilius est bene conversari cum cura animarum propter exteriora pericula (St. Thomas, 2a, 2ae, q. 184, a. 8).

Quo amplior atque diffusior actio sacerdotis curati, eo periculosior et exitiosior nisi spiritu contemplationis fulciatur (Card. Fischer, *Opusc. de Vita conietnp.).*

to *be fully aware* of his incessant danger, it. would greatly contribute to save him from the dangers of the road ; for a danger foreseen is a danger avoided. But the interior life is much more useful than this. It becomes for the man engaged in the ministry a complete set of armour : *Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil,1* divine armour which enables him not only to resist temptations and avoid the snares of the devil : *that you may be able to resist in the evil day,* but also to sanctify all his actions : *and to stand in all things perfect.*

It girds him with *purity of intention* which fixes on God all his thoughts, desires and affections and prevents him from wandering in search of his own comfort, pleasure and distractions : *having your loins girt about with truth.*

It puts on him the breastplate of *charity,* which gives him a manly heart and protects him against the seductions of creatures and of the spirit of the world as well as against the assaults of the demon : *having on the breastplate of justice.*

He is shod with *discretion* and *reserve,* so that in all his goings and comings he may know how to combine the simplicity of the dove with the cunning of the serpent : *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.*

Satan and the world will try to deceive his intellect with the sophisms of false doctrines, to sap his energy with the bait of lax principles. To these lies the interior life opposes the shield of *faith,* which keeps ever before our eyes the splendour of the divine ideal : *in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one.*

1. Put you on the armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. . that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect. Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace ; in all things taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one. And take unto you the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God *(Ephes.,* VI, 11-17).

The knowledge of his own nothingness, care for his own salvation, the conviction that he can do nothing without the help of grace, and the consequent need of prayer, earnest, humble and frequent, the more powerful in proportion to its confidence,—all these are to the soul a helmet of bronze against which the blows of *pride* are dulled : *take unto you the helmet of salvation.*

Thus armed from head to foot, the apostle can fearlessly devote himself to the ministry ; and his zeal, enkindled by meditation on the Gospel, strengthened by the bread of the Holy Eucharist, will become a sword that will serve him to *fight* his enemies and to *conquer* a host of souls for Christ : *and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God.*

(b) It renews the strength of the apostle.

Only a saint, as we have said, is able to keep intact the interior spirit and to direct his thoughts and intentions always to God alone in the midst of the worries of business and in spite of constant contact with the world. In him all outlay of exterior activity is so supernaturalised and inflamed with charity that far from lessening his spiritual strength, it necessarily brings about an increase of grace.

In other people, even the fervent, the supernatural life seems to suffer loss at the end of a longer or shorter time devoted to exterior occupations. Too preoccupied with the good to be done to their neighbour, too much absorbed by mere natural pity for woes to be alleviated, their less perfect hearts seem to send up to God a flame less bright, dimmed by the smoke of many imperfections.

God does not punish this weakness by any lessening of His grace, nor is He severe on these failings, provided that there is a serious attempt at vigilance and prayer while at work, and that when the work is done the soul is ready to return to Him to rest and renew its energy. This habit of *beginning again* continually, which is necessitated by the combination of the active and the interior lives, gives joy to His paternal heart.

Besides, in those who really put up a fight these imperfections become less serious and less frequent, according as the soul learns to have ceaseless recourse to Jesus whom we shall always find ready to say to us: "Return to me, poor panting heart, thirsting with the length of the chase. Come and find in these living waters the secret of fresh energy for new journeys. Withdraw awhile from the crowd which is unable give you the food which your exhausted strength requires: *Come apart and rest a little.*[1] In the peace and quiet that you will enjoy with Me, not only will you renew your early vigour, but you will learn to do more with less expense of toil. Elias, disheartened and discouraged, found his strength renewed in an instant by the mysterious bread. And so, my Apostle, in this enviable task of co-redeemer, which it has pleased Me to entrust to you, I offer you both by My word which is all life, and by My grace, that is by My Precious Blood, the chance to direct your mind once again towards the horizon of eternity, and to renew the covenant of friendship between your heart and Mine. Come, I will console you for the sorrow's and disappointments of the journey. And in the furnace of My love you shall temper once again the steel of your resolve: *Come to me all you that labour and are burdened and I will refresh you.*[2]

(c) It multiples his energy and his merits.

Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesiis?[3] Grace is a participation in the life of the God-Man. The creature possesses a *certain* measure of strength and in a sense can be qualified and defined as a force; but Jesus is power in its very essence. In Him

1. Venite seorsum et requiescite pusillum (Marc., VI, 31).
2. Venite ad me omnes qui laboratis et onerati estis et ego reficiam vos (Matt., XI, 28). Concerning these appeals of Our Ixjrd to souls of good, will see what is said on page 211, about custody of the heart.
3. Tu ergo fili, confortare in gratia, quae est in Christo Jesu (II Tim., II, I).

dwells the fullness of the Father's power, the omnipotence of divine action, and His spirit is called the spirit of power.

"O Jesus," cries St. Gregory of Nazianzen, "in Thee alone dwells all my strength." "Outside of Christ," says St. Jerome in his turn, "I am powerless."

The Seraphic Doctor in the fourth book of his *Compendium Theologiae* names the five chief characteristics which the power of Jesus assumes in us.

The first is that it undertakes difficult tasks and faces obstacles with courage; *Work manfully and let your heart be strong.*[1]

The second is contempt for the things of this earth. *I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ.*[2][3]

The third is patience in trials and tribulations: *Love strong as death*[3]

The fourth is resistance to temptations: *As a roaring lion he goeth about . . . whom resist ye strong in faith.*[4]

The fifth is martyrdom of the soul, that is, the testimony, not of blood, but of one's very life itself, crying out to Our Lord: "I wish to be wholly Thine." It consists in fighting concupiscence, overcoming vice and working energetically to acquire virtue. *I have fought the good fight.*[5][6]

While the man bent on exterior things counts on his natural powers, the interior man sees in them only helps, useful no doubt, but inadequate. The sense of his weakness, and his faith in the power of God give him, as they did to St. Paul, the exact limit of his strength. At the sight of the obstacles which present themselves to him one after the other he exclaims with humble pride: *For when I am weak, then am I powerful*[6]

"Without interior life," says Saint Pius X, "strength

1. Viriliter agite et confortetur cor vestrum (Ps. XXXI, 24).
2. Omnia detrimentum feci et arbitror ut stercora, ut lucrifaciam Christum (Philipp., III, 8).
3. Fortis ut mors dilectio (Cant., VIII, 6).
4. Tanquam leo rugiens circuit . . . cui resistite fortes in fide (I Petr., V, 8).
5. Bonum certamen certavi (II Tim., IV, 7).
6. Cum enim infirmor, tunc potens sum (II Cor., XII, 10).

will be lacking to endure with perseverance the difficulties inseparable from any apostolate, the lack of interest and of support even from good men, the slanders of opponents, sometimes even the jealousy of friends and of one's fellow workers . . . Only patient virtue, strong for good and at the same time gentle and tactful, is capable of removing or lessening these difficulties."[1]

By the life of prayer divine strength, like unto the sap flowing from the trunk into the branches, descends upon the apostle to confirm his *understanding* by basing it more firmly on faith. He makes progress, because this virtue illumines his path with clear light. He advances boldly because he knows whither he is going and how to reach his goal.

This enlightenment is accompanied by such great *supernatural energy in the will* that even a man of weak and inconstant character becomes capable of heroic deeds.

Thus it is that the principle, "Abide in Me,"[2] the union with the Immutable, with Him who is the Lion of Juda and the Bread of the strong, explains the marvel of the invincible constancy and perfect firmness which in the admirable apostle, St. Francis of Sales, were combined with unparalleled gentleness and humility. The mind and the will are strengthened by the interior life, because love is strengthened. Our Lord purifies this love, directs it and increases it as we progress in the spiritual life. He allows it to share in the compassion, the devotion, the self-denial, and the generosity of His adorable Heart. If this love increases until it becomes a passion, then Jesus takes all the natural and supernatural powers of man and exalts them to a maximum, using them for Himself.

Thus it is easy to see how great is the increase of merit resulting from the multiplication of our energies which the interior life gives, if we remember that merit depends less on the difficulty entailed in performing an action, than on the *intensity of love* with which it is carried out.

1. Encycl. of St. Pius X, June 11, 1905, to the Bishops of Italy.
2. Manete in me (Joan., XV, 4).

(d) It gives him joy and consolation.

Only an ardent and constant love is capable of brightening one's whole life, for love possesses the secret of gladdening the heart even in the midst of great sorrows and crushing fatigue.

The life of an apostle is a tissue of suffering and of toil. If he has not the conviction of being loved by Our Lord, what hours of sadness, anxiety and gloom he must pass, however buoyant his disposition may be ; unless, in order to attract this simple bird into his inextricable net, the demon fowler makes the mirror of human consolation and apparent success glitter before his eyes. The Man-God alone can draw from the soul this superhuman cry : *I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.*[1] "In the midst of my innermost trials," says the apostle, "the higher part of my soul, like that of Jesus in Gethsemani, enjoys a happiness which certainly does not exist in the senses ; but yet it is so real that in spite of the suffering endured by my inferior self, I would not exchange it for all the joys of the world."

When trials come, such as contradiction, humiliation, suffering, the loss of goods, even the loss of loved ones, the soul will accept all these crosses in quite a different manner from the way in which she would have accepted them at the beginning of her conversion.

From day to day the soul grows in charity. Her love may be quite unspectacular ; the Master may treat her as a strong soul, guiding her deeper and deeper in the paths of humiliation, or in the arduous path of expiation for herself and for the world. It matters not ! Protected by recollection, nourished by the Holy Eucharist, her love grows ever greater ; the proof of this growth is seen in the generosity with which this soul sacrifices and abandons herself ; in the devotedness which urges her to press forward without counting the cost to seek those souls upon whom her

VII,

1. Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostra (II Cor., VII, 4).

apostolate is to be exercised with such patience, prudence, tact, pity and ardour that only the penetration of the life of Our Lord in her can explain it : *Vivit vero in me Christus.*

The Sacrament of Love ought to be the Sacrament of joy. The soul cannot be interior without being at the same time eucharistie and, therefore, one who enjoys inwardly the gift of God, rejoices in His abiding presence, and tastes the sweetness of the Beloved, whom she possesses and adores.

The life of the apostolic man is a life of prayer. " The life of prayer ! " says St. John Vianney of Ars, " this is real happiness here below. O wonderful life ! wonderful union of the soul with Our Lord ! Eternity will not be long enough to understand this happiness . . . The interior life is a bath of love into which the soul plunges . . . It is, as it were, drowned in love . . . God holds the interior soul as a mother holds her baby's head in her hand to cover it with kisses and caresses."

Again our joy will be nourished whenever we are the means of causing the object of our love to be served and honoured. The apostolic man knows all this happiness.

Making use of his active ministry to increase his love, he feels his joy and his consolation growing at the same time. " A hunter of souls, *venator animarum,"* he has the joy of helping to save beings who would have been damned, and thus he has the joy of consoling God by giving him souls, which would have been eternally separated from Him ; and finally he has the joy of knowing that in this way he gains for himself one of the most solid assurances of progress in virtue and of eternal glory.

(e) It refines his purity oî intention.

The man of faith judges active works from a totally different point of view from that of the man who lives in outward things. What he perceives is not so much the outward appearance of things as the part they play in the divine plan and their supernatural results.

Therefore, looking on himself as a mere instrument, he cherishes in his soul a detestation of all self-satisfaction in his own abilities ; the more so as he bases his expectation of success solely on the conviction of his own helplessness and on his confidence in God alone.

Thus he is strengthened in his state of resignation to God's will. When difficulties arise, what a great difference there is between his attitude and that of the apostle who knows not the intimacy of Our Lord !

This resignation lessens in no way his zeal for his active ministry. He acts as if success depended solely on his activity, but in point of fact he expects it from God alone. [1]

He has no difficulty in subordinating all his plans and his hopes to the unfathomable designs of God, who often makes more use of failure than of success for the good of souls.

Hence this soul will remain in a state of holy indifference to success or failure. " O my God," he is always ready to say, " Thou dost not will that the work I have begun should be completed. It pleases Thee that I should confine myself to working generously, but with calmness of soul, in my efforts to achieve a good result, leaving to Thee alone the task of deciding whether more glory will be given Thee by the success of the undertaking than by the act of virtue which failure gives me the chance of performing. May Thy holy and adorable Will be a thousand times blessed ; may I with the aid of Thy grace be able also to trample under foot the least signs of vain complacency, if Thou shouldst bless my work ; and may I humble myself and adore Thee, if Thy Providence sees fit to destroy the fruit of my toil."

In truth, the heart of the apostle bleeds at the sight of the tribulations ol the Church ; but his manner of suffering has nothing in common with that of the man who is not animated by a supernatural spirit. This is easily seen when we consider the latter's behaviour and his feverish activity when troubles come, his impatience, his low spirits, sometimes his complete collapse, his despair in the presence

1. St. Ignatius Loyola.

of irretrievable ruin. The genuine apostle makes use of everything, failure as well as success, to increase his hope and to expand his soul in confident resignation to Providence. There is not a detail of his apotsolate which does not serve as the occasion for an act of faith ; there is not a moment of his steadfast toil which does not give him a chance to show his love ; for by practising custody of the heart, he contrives to carry out everything with greater purity of intention, and to make his ministry daily more selfless.

Thus each of his actions every day take on more and more the character of holiness ; and his love of souls, at first alloyed with many imperfections, grows constantly purer and finally he sees these souls only in Jesus, loves them only in Jesus and thus by Jesus he brings them forth to God : *My little children, of whom I am in labour again, until Christ be formed in you.* 1

(f) It is a defence against discouragement.

The following sentence from Bossuet is incomprehensible to an apostle who has not grasped what ought to be the soul of his apostolate : " When God wishes a work to be wholly from His own hand, He reduces everything to impotence and nothingness and then He acts."

Nothing wounds God more than pride. Now, in seeking success we may through want of purity of intention reach the point of setting ourselves up as a kind of divinity, the principle and end of all our own works. Such idolatry is an abomination in the sight of God. Therefore when He sees the activity of the apostle wanting in that disinterestedness which His glory demands from creatures, He sometimes leaves the field clear for secondary causes to go to work and soon the building comes crashing down.

Active, intelligent, devoted, the workman has begun his task with all the ardour of his nature. He has perhaps met with brilliant success, he has even enjoyed it, viewed

1. Filioli mei quos iterum parturio, donec formetur Christus in vobis (Gal., IV, 19).

it with pride. It is his work! *Veni, vidi, vici.* He has almost made the famous phrase his own. But wait awhile. Some event allowed by God or a direct attack by Satan or the world strikes at the work or even the person of the apostle; result, total ruin! But far more lamentable is the interior ravage resulting from the sorrow and dejection of the valiant warrior of yesterday. The greater was his joy, the more profound is his despondency.

Our Lord alone can raise this wreck. "Arise," He says to the despondent apostle, "and instead of acting alone, begin your work again, but with Me, by Me and in Me." But the wretched man no longer hears this voice. He is so given to external things, that it would require a real miracle of grace for him to hear it and on this miracle he has no right to count, owing to his repeated infidelities. Only a vague conviction of the power of God and of His Providence hovers above the desolation of his wretchedness, but is not enough to drive away the clouds of sadness which continue to envelop him.

What a different spectacle we have in the true priest, whose ideal it is to reproduce Our Lord! For him prayer and holiness of life are ever the two great means of acting both on the Heart of God and on the hearts of men. Yes, he has spent himself, and that generously. But the misleading light of success has always seemed to him a prospect unworthy of a true apostle. Should storms arise, little does it matter what secondary cause has produced them. In the midst of a heap of ruins, since he has worked only with Our Lord, he hears clearly in the depths of his soul the same "Fear not, *Nolite timere,*" which during the tempest restored peace and confidence to the trembling disciples.

He hastens to renew his love of the Blessed Sacrament, and his deep, personal devotion towards Our Lady of Sorrows; this is the first result of the trial.

His soul instead of being crushed by failure comes forth from the winepress grown young again. *His youth will be renewed like the eagle.* [1] Where does he get this attitudei.

1. Sicut aquilae juventus renovabitur (Ps., CIII, 5).

of humble triumph in the midst of defeat? The secret must be sought nowhere else but in that union with Our Lord and that unshaken confidence in His omnipotence which made St. Ignatius say: "If the Company were to be suppressed without any fault of mine, a quarter of an hour's colloquy alone with God would be enough to give me back my calm and peace." "The heart of interior souls," says the Curé of Ars, "stands in the midst of humiliations and suffering like a rock in the midst of the sea."

How many of those engaged in good works can apply to their own lives the sentiments which General de Sonis expresses in that wonderful daily prayer of his, quoted by the author of his life?

"O my God, behold me before Thee, poor, humble, wanting in everything. I am here at Thy feet, sunk in the depths of my nothingness. Would that I had something to offer Thee, but I am nothing but wretchedness! Thou, Thou art my all, Thou are my wealth.

O my God, I thank Thee for having willed that I should be as nothing before Thee. I love my humiliation and my nothingness. I thank Thee for having taken away from me any gratifications of self-love, any consolations of affection. I thank Thee for disappointment, ingratitude, humiliation. I know that I have need of them and that the gift of success might have kept me far from Thee.

O my God, I bless Thee when Thou dost try me. I love to be used up, broken, destroyed by Thee. Crush me more and more. May I be in the building, not like the stone worked and polished by the hand of the mason, but like the hidden grain of sand, gathered from the dust of the road.

My God, I thank Thee for having shown me a glimpse of the sweetness of Thy consolations. I thank Thee for having deprived me of them; all Thou dost is just and good. I bless Thee in my want of all tilings, I regret nothing except not having loved Thee enough. I desire nothing but that Thy holy Will be done.

Thou art my Master and I am Thy property; turn me this way or that; destroy me and work upon me however Thou wilt. I wish to be reduced to nothing for the love of Thee.

O Jesus how gentle is Thy hand even in the depth of trials. Let me be crucified, but crucified by Thee. Amen."

Assuredly the apostle suffers. The loss of several members of his flock may perhaps be the result of something that has just frustrated his efforts and ruined his work. For this true shepherd it is a bitter grief, but it is far from slackening his ardour, and this ardour will enable him to begin again.

He knows that redemption, even though applied but to a single soul, is a great work accomplished above all by suffering. The certainty that trials, generously undergone, increase his progress in virtue and give greater glory to God is enough to sustain him.

Besides, he knows that often God wants from him nothing more than the seeds of success. Others will come who will reap plentiful harvests and perhaps think that the result is due to themselves. But Heaven will know that the cause of it was in the thankless and apparently barren toil which went before: *I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour; others have laboured and you have entered into their labours*.[1]

Our Lord, author of the success of His apostles after Pentecost, did but sow the seed during the course of His public life by teaching and example; and He foretold to His apostles that it would be given to them to do works greater than His: *The works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do.*[2]

What! the true apostle lose courage! He allow himself to be shaken by the talk of the fainthearted! He give himself to idleness because of failure! To say so is not to understand his hidden life and his faith in Christ. Tireless as the working bees, joyously will he build up again new honeycombs in his plundered hive.

1. Misi vos metere quod vos non laborastis; alii laboraverunt et vos in labores eorum introistis, (Joan., IV, 38).

2. Opera quae ego facio, et ipse faciet, et majora horum faciet (Joan., XIV, 12).

PART FOUR

RICH RESULTS OF THE MINISTRY THROUGH THE INTERIOR LIFE

The interior Life is a condition of the fruitfulness of the Ministry.

We leave aside the cause of fruitfulness which theologians call *ex opere operato.* Considering only the results which come *ex opere operantis* we recall that if the apostle realises the truth of the words, *He who abideth in me and I in him,* the rich results of his ministry willed by God are assured : *the same beareth much fruit.*[1] This is the plain logic of the text. After such an authority it is needless to prove this thesis. We shall limit ourselves to strengthening it by facts.

We have been able to follow from afar during more than thirty years the progress of two girls' orphanages managed by two different congregations. Each one has had to go through a period of evident decline. There is no harm in stating facts. Out of sixteen orphans who entered under the same conditions and left at twenty-one, three from the first house and two from the second had passed in eight months from the practice of frequent communion to the most degraded level in the social scale. Only one of the other eleven remained a thorough Catholic ; and yet all of them on leaving had been placed in good situations.

In one of these orphanages the Reverend Mother was changed after eleven years. Six months afterwards a radical change was apparent in the spirit of the house.

The same change was noticed three years after in the other orphanage, because, while the same superior and the same nuns remained, the chaplain had been changed.

Now, since that time not one of these poor children on leaving at twenty-one has been dragged down by Satan into the gutter. All, all of them without exception have remained good Catholics.

1. Qui manet in me et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum (Joan., XV, 5).

The reason for these results is very simple. At the head of the house, or in the confessional, there was no really supernatural spiritual direction; this was enough to paralyse or at least to lessen the action of grace. The former superior in one case and the chaplain in the other, although sincerely pious people were without any deep interior life, and had in consequence no profound or lasting influence. Theirs was a piety based on feelings, produced by upbringing and environment, made up exclusively of pious practices and habits, producing only a vague belief, love without strength, virtue without root, a flabby piety, all for show, full of affectation, mechanical; it was a sentimental piety, only capable of producing good little girls with no strength of character and dragged along by their feelings and their imagination; it was a piety powerless to give them a broad conception of the Christian life and to produce valiant women prepared for the struggle of life; at the most, all it was good for was to keep those unhappy girls languishing in their cages and longing for the day that would set them free. This was all that those gospel workers to whom the interior life was almost unknown were able to do to develop the seeds of Christian life. In these two communities a superior, a chaplain are replaced. At once the face of things is altered. Prayer is understood in quite a new way and the Sacraments produce fruit; there is a different attitude in the chapel, even in class and at recreation; inquiry shows radical changes, manifested by the quiet joy, the good spirit, the attainment of virtue, and in some souls an intense desire for a religious vocation. To what are we to attribute such a transformation? The new Reverend Mother, the new chaplain were interior souls.

No doubt in a number of boarding or day schools, hospitals, clubs and even parishes, communities and seminaries, an attentive observer may have noted similar effects from the same causes.

Listen to St. John of the Cross. "Let the men eaten up with activity, and who think that they are shaking the world by their preaching or other exterior works, reflect here a moment. They will understand without any difficulty

that they would be *much more useful* to the Church and more pleasing to the Lord, not to mention the good example that they would spread around them, if they gave more time to prayer and the exercises of the interior life.

Under these conditions *by a single good work of theirs* they would do far more good with far less trouble, than they accomplish by a *thousand others* on which they waste their lives. Mental prayer would merit for them this grace, and win for them the spiritual strength which they need to produce such results. Without prayer all they do merely amounts to a great uproar ; it is like the hammer falling on the anvil and making the neighbouring echoes resound. They accomplish *a little more than nothing, often absolutely nothing, and sometimes they even cause harm.* May God preserve a soul like that if it happens to get puffed up with pride ! In vain will appearances be in its favour ; the truth is that it will achieve nothing, for it is absolutely certain that no good work can be carried on without the grace of God. Oh ! how much could be written on this subject for the information of those who abandon the practice of the interior life, while they aspire to conspicuous good works in order to put themselves on a pedestal and make them the admired of all ! Such people have no understanding of the source of living water and of the mysterious fountain which makes all fruit to grow." 1

Some of the words used by this Saint are as strong as the expression, *acctirsed occupations,* of St. Bernard, quoted on an earlier page. It is not possible to charge him with exaggeration, when we remember that the qualities which Bossuet most admired in St. John of the Cross, were his perfect common sense, his zeal for putting souls on guard against the desire of extraordinary ways of reaching holiness and his strict accuracy in expressing thoughts of remarkable depth.

Let us now attempt a study of some of the causes of the fruitfulness of the interior Life.

I. *Cant. Spirit.,* str. XXIX.

(a) The interior Lite draws down the blessings of God.

I will inebriate the soul of the priests with richness and my people will be filled with my blessings. [1] Notice the connection between the two parts of this text. God does not say: "I will give to my priests more zeal, more talent," but, "I shall intoxicate their soul." What does this mean but: "I shall fill them with my spirit, I shall impart to them my choicest graces and *thus my people shall receive the plenitude of my gifts.*"

God might have distributed His graces according to His good pleasure without taking into account either the piety of the minister or the dispositions of the faithful. That is the way He acts in the baptism of infants. But according to the ordinary law of His Providence these two elements become the measure of His heavenly gifts.

Without Me, you can do nothing [2]; such is the principle; the blood that redeemed us was shed on Calvary; how was God going to assure its fruitfulness at the very start? By a miraculous infusion of interior Life. Nothing was more paltry than the ideals and the zeal of the Apostles before Pentecost. The Holy Ghost converts them into interior men and at once their preaching works wonders. God will no longer renew, in the ordinary course of things, the prodigy of the Upper Room. Henceforth He will leave the graces of sanctification to struggle with the free and arduous correspondence of His creature. But by making Pentecost the official date of the birth of the Church does He not sufficiently give us to understand that His ministers must make their own personal sanctification the first step in their work of co-redeemers?

Therefore all true apostolic workers expect much more from their sacrifices and their prayers than from thier active work. Father Lacordaire spent a long time in mental prayer before ascending the pulpit steps and when he returned to his cell he scourged himself. Father Monsabré before

1. Inebriabo animam sacerdotum pinguedine et populus meus bonis meis adimplebitur (Jerem,, XXXI, 14).
2. Sine me nihil potestis facere (Joan., XV, 5).

preaching at Notre Dame recited the full rosary on his knees. " I am taking my last dose of tonic," he jokingly replied to a friend who questioned him on this practice. These two religious both lived on the principle set forth by St. Bonaventure : " The secrets of a fruitful apostolate are derived more from the foot of the crucifix, than from the display of brilliant qualities." " These three remain : word, example, prayer ; but the greatest of these is prayer," [1] cries St. Bernard ; a strong expression, which is but the commentary on the resolution taken by the Apostles to abandon certain work in order to apply themselves first to prayer, *orationi,* and only in the second place to preaching, *ministerio verbi?*

We have often pointed out the primary importance that Our Saviour gives to this spirit of prayer. Looking out over the world and the ages to come and seeing the multitude of souls to be saved by the Gospel, He cried out in sorrow : *The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few ?* What means will He propose as the quickest way to spread His teaching ? Will He ask His disciples to attend the schools of Athens or to go and study under the Caesars at Rome how empires are won and administered? You men of zeal, listen to the Master ; it is a clear programme, a clear principle that He reveals : *Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into the harvest?* Clever organisation, the raising of funds, building of churches and schools—of all that, no mention. *Pray ye therefore,* prayer, the spirit of mental prayer, the Master constantly repeated this fundamental truth. The rest, all the rest follow from this.

Pray ye therefore ! If the faint murmur of supplication from a holy soul has more power to raise up legions of[2]

1. Manent tria haec : verbum, exemplum et oratio ; maxima autem horum est oratio.

2. Acts, VI, 4.

3. Matth., IX, 37.

4. Messis quidem multa, operarii autem pauci. Rogate ergo Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam (Matth., IX. 37. 38).

apostles, than the eloquent voice of a recruiter of vocations who is less filled with the spirit of God, what are we to conclude? Simply that the spirit of prayer which, in the true apostle, goes hand in hand with zeal, is the chief reason for the fruitfulness of his work.

Pray ye therefore! Pray then first of all: only after that does Our Lord add: *Going, teach . . . preach.*[1] Of course God will make use of this other means; but the blessing which gives rich results to the ministry is reserved to the man of mental prayer, prayer powerful enough to draw down from the bosom of God an apostolic force that souls cannot resist.

The authoritative voice of Saint Pius X points out clearly the argument of this little book: "To restore all things in Christ by the apostolate of good works we need divine grace, and the apostle will receive it only if he is one with Christ. When we have formed Jesus Christ in ourselves, then only shall we be able to give Him easily to families and to societies. Therefore all those who share in the apostolate must have solid piety."[2]

What has been said about prayer must be said also about that other element of the interior Life, *suffering*; that is, everything which goes against our natural feelings, either from outside or from within.

A man may suffer like a pagan, like the damned, or like a saint. To suffer truly with Christ we must strive to suffer like the saints. Suffering always is of benefit to our own souls, and applies the merits of the Passion to those of others: *I fill ufi those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body which is the Church.*[3] "The sufferings of Christ," says St. Augustine commenting on this text, "were all filled up, but in the head only; there were wanting still the sufferings of Christ in His members. Christ went before as the head, and follows

1. Euntes docete . . ., praedicate (Matt., X, 7).

2. Encycl. of Saint Pius X to the Bishops of Italy, 11 June, 1905.

3. Adimpleo ea quae desunt passionum Christi, in carne mea, pro corpore ejus quod est Ecclesia (Coloss., I, 24).

after in His Mystical Body." [1] Each priest may say: "I am that Body. I am a member of Christ, and what is wanting of the sufferings of Christ, I must fill up for His body which is the Church."

"Suffering," says Father Faber, "is the greatest of the Sacraments." This profound theologian shows the necessity of suffering and states its glories. All the arguments of the celebrated Oratorian may be applied to the rich results of the ministry by the union of the sacrifices of the apostolic worker with the sacrifice of Golgotha, and thus by their sharing in the efficacy of the Precious Blood.

(b) It helps the apostle to sanctify others by good example.

In His Sermon on the Mount the Master calls His apostles *the salt of the earth, the light of the world.*[2]

We are the salt of the earth in the same proportion that we are holy; but what use is salt which has lost its savour? *What shall be cleansed by the unclean?*[3] It is good for nothing but to be cast out and trampled under foot.

The true salt of the earth on the contrary, the pious apostle, wall be a real agent of preservation in the midst of that sea of corruption which is human society. As a beacon shining in the night, "the light of the WOrld," the brightness of his example, even more than his wlords, will dispel the darkness piled up by the spirit of the world and will radiate the ideal of true happiness which Jesus has set forth in the eight Beatitudes.

The one thing most likely to bring the faithful to lead a Christian life is the virtue of him who has the mission to teach it. On the other hand, his imperfections keep people away from God almost infallibly. *The name of God through you is blasphemed among the gentiles.* [4] That is why the apostle

1. Impletae erant omnes, sed in capite, restabant adhuc passiones Christi in membris. Christus praecessit in capite, sequitur in corpore.
2. Matt., V, 13.
3. Ab immundo quid mundabitur? (Eccl. XXXIV, 4).
4. Nomen Dei per vos blasphematur inter gentes (Rom., II, 24).

must have more frequently the torch of good example in his hand than fine words on his lips ; he must be the first to practise in a high degree the virtues which he preaches. " He who has a mission to preach great things is bound by that very fact to practise great things," says St. Gregory.[1]

It has been said with justice that the physician of the body can heal his patients without being in good health himself ; but to be a healer of souls a man must himself have a healthy soul, for in this case he gives something of himself. Men have every right to be exacting and expect much of those who claim to teach them self-reform. They are quick to discover whether there is agreement between their words and deeds, or whether the morality with which the preacher is decked be only a delusive wrapping. It is on the basis of their observations that they give or withhold their confidence.

What great power the priest will have in speaking about prayer if the people see him frequently conversing with the Host of the Tabernacle so often forsaken. How attentively will his word be listened to when he preaches penance and hard work, if he is himself mortified and hardworking ! When he exhorts them to love one another, he will find his listeners attentive if he is careful to spread among his flock the good odour of Jesus Christ, and if the gentleness and humility of the divine Model is mirrored in his own conduct. *A pattern of the flock from the heart.*"[2]

The professor who is careless of the interior life imagines that he has done his full duty if he limits himself to the programme of the examinations. If he were a man of prayer, a phrase escaping not only from his lips but from his heart, an expression on his face, a significant gesture, nay, his manner alone of making the sign of the cross, of saying the prayers before or after class, would have more influence over his pupils than a whole sermon.

A sister in a hospital or an orphanage has at hand the

1. Qui enim sui loci necessitate exigitur summa dicere, hac eadem necessitate compellitur summa monstrare (S. Greg., *Pastor,* 2 p, c. III).

2. Forma gregis ex animo (I Petr., V, 3).

power and the effective means to sow in souls a deep love of Our Lord and His teachings, while prudently keeping to her duty. But if she has no interior Life, she will not even suspect the presence of this power, or it will not occur to her to do anything more than encourage acts of exterior piety.

Christianity was spread less by long and frequent discussions than by the sight of Christian conduct, so opposed to the selfishness, the injustice, and the corniption of the pagans.

In his masterpiece, *Fabiola,* Cardinal Wiseman brings out what a great influence the example of the early Christians had even on those pagan souls who were most prejudiced against the new religion, We observe in this story the progressive and almost irresistible advance of a soul towards the light. The noble sentiments, the virtues, whether modest or heroic, which the daughter of Fabius meets in various people of all classes compel her admiration. But then she discovers one by one that all those whose charity, devotedness, modesty, gentleness, moderation, devotion to justice and chastity she admires, belong to that sect which has always been represented to her as accursed ! A great change takes place in her ; it is a revelation to her soul. From that moment she is a Christian.

After having finished the book, who can help exclaiming : " Ah ! if only present-day Catholics, or their ministers at least, had something of that splendid Christian life depicted by the illustrious Cardinal, and which nevertheless is only the Gospel put into practice " How irresistible then would be their apostolate among those modem pagans who are too often prejudiced against Catholicism by the calumnies of heretics, the bitter style of our controversy, or by our manner of insisting on our rights in a tone which seems to come from wounded pride rather than from the desire to maintain the interests of Jesus !

Oh ! how powerful is the influence radiated by a soul united to God ! It was from seeing Father Passerai celebrate Holy Mass that the young Desurmont decided to enter the Redemptorist Congregation, of which he became so illustrious a member.

The faithful have intuitions which do not lead them astray. When a real man of God preaches they gather in crowds to hear him. But should the conduct of one in the ministry no longer correspond to what is expected of him, then his work, no matter how ably it may be carried on, is harmed and is perhaps doomed to ruin beyond recovery.

Let them see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven,[1] said Our Lord. St. Paul recommends good example time and again to his disciples, Titus and Timothy: *In all things show thyself an example of good works.*[2] *Be thou an example to the faithful, in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity.*[3] St. Paul himself says: *The things which you have seen in me, these do you.*[4] *Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ.*[5] And his words, full of truth, spring from that confidence and zeal which are quite in conformity with humility, and which made Our Saviour say: *Which of you shall convince me of sin?*[6][8]

On this condition, following the footsteps of Him, of whom it is written: *Jesus began to do and to teach,*"[7] the apostle will become a *workman that needeth not to be ashamed.*[8]

" Above all, my dear sons " said Leo XIII, " remember that the indispensable condition for true zeal and the best pledge of success is purity and holiness of life." [9]

" A saintly man," says St. Teresa, " does more real good to souls than a great number of others who are merely more learned or better gifted."

" If the mind is not guided by a rule of life that is truly holy and Christian," declares Saint Pius X, "it will be

1. Videant opera vestra bona et glorificent Patrem vestrum qui in caelis est (Matt., V, 16).
2. In omnibus teipsum praebe exemplum bonorum operum (Tit., II, 7).
3. Exemplum esto fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in castitate (I Tim., IV, 12).
4. Quae vidistis in me haec agite (Philipp., IV, 9).
5. Imitatores mei estote sicut et ego Christi (I Cor., XI, 1).
6. Quis ex vobis arguet me de peccato? (Joan., VIII, 46).
7. Coepit facere et docere Jesus (Act., I, 1).
8. Operarium inconfusibilem (II Tim., II, 15).
9. *Encycl.* of H. H. Leo XIII, 8 Sept. 1899.

difficult to induce others to lead a godly life." And he adds, " All those who are called to a life of Catholic works ought to be men of a life so free from blame, that they may serve as a powerful example to every one." 1

(c) It produces in the apostle supernatural radiation. How powerful this radiation is.

One of the most serious obstacles to the conversion of a soul is the fact that God is a hidden God: *Deus absconditus.*2.

But by an effect of His goodness God reveals Himself to a certain extent through His saints and even through fervent souls. *The supernatural thus gels through to the eyes of the faithful, who perceive something of the mystery of God.*

What then is this diffusion of the supernatural ? May it not be the bright light of holiness, the splendour of the divine entry into the soul, which theologians usually call sanctifying grace ? Better still perhaps, it is the result of the unutterable presence of the Three Divine Persons in the souls of those whom They sanctify.

St. Basil gave it precisely this explanation : " When the Holy Ghost enters souls that His grace has purified, it is to purify them further. Just as the sun makes the crystal more dazzling when it shines on it and penetrates it with its rays, so too the sanctifying Spirit renders the souls in which He dwells more luminous and, as a result of His presence, they become so many fiery centres, which spread around them grace and charity.3

This *manifestation* of the Divine which showed itself in all the actions and even in the repose of the God-Man is to be seen in certain souls gifted with a more intense interior life. The marvellous conversions which some saints effected merely by the renown of their virtues, the crowds of aspirants to the spiritual life who came asking to follow them, proclaim loudly enough the secret of their

1. *Encycl.* of Saint Fins X to the Bishops of Italy, n June 1905.
2 Isai., XLV, 15. 3. *De Spiritu Sancto,* c. IX, 23.

silent apostolate. St. Anthony caused the deserts of the Orient to be filled with people. Through St. Benedict arose that countless phalanx of holy religious who civilised Europe. An exceptional influence was exercised by St. Bernard throughout Christendom over kings and nations. St. Vincent Ferrer wherever he went roused the indescribable enthusiasm of numberless crowds and, what was better, brought about their conversion. Led by St. Ignatius Loyola came that valiant army of whom one alone, St. Francis Xavier, was enough to baptise an incredible number of pagans. The radiation of the power of God Himself through human instruments is the only thing that can explain these wonders.

What a misfortune it is, when among the persons placed at the head of important projects there is not one really interior soul. Supernatural life seems to be eclipsed and the power of God is as it were in fetters. Then it is, the saints teach us, that a country decays and that Providence seems to allow evil men to do all the harm they wish.

Be sure of this, souls perceive by instinct, so to speak, this *radiation of the supernatural,* without being able to define clearly what they feel. Thus we see how the sinner who recognises God Himself in His representative, comes and prostrates Himself at the feet of the priest to beg forgiveness. And on the other hand is it not from the day on which the full conception of holiness ceased to be the necessary ideal of the ministry in any Christian sect, that this sect was infallibly led to abolish confession ?

John indeed did no sign.[1] Without performing a single miracle John the Baptist attracted great crowds. The voice of the holy Curé of Ars was too weak to reach all those who gathered around him. But if they scarcely heard him, they saw him ; they saw one who brought God to them, and the mere sight of him subdued those present and converted them. A lawyer coming back from Ars was asked what had struck him most ; " I have seen God in a man," he replied.

1. Joannes quidem signum fecit nullum (Joan., X, 41).

May we be allowed to sum up all this by a rather commonplace comparison ? You know this experiment in electricity. A person placed on an insulating stool is put in contact with an electric machine. His body becomes charged with electricity and the moment any one touches him, a spark flies out, giving a shock to the person brought into contact. Thus it is with the interior man. Once he is detached from creatures, there is established between Our Lord and him an unceasing movement like a continuous current. The apostle becomes a *storage accumulator of supernatural life,* and condenses in himself a divine current which alters and adapts itself to the circumstances and all the needs of the sphere in which he works. *Virtue went out from Him and healed all.*[1] His words and acts are but the emanations of this latent power, which is effective in overcoming all obstacles, obtaining conversions and increasing fervour.

The more the theological virtues fill a man's soul, the more do these emanations help to produce these virtues in other souls.

By THE INTERIOR LIFE THE APOSTLE RADIATES FAITH. —The presence of God within him is manifest to the people who hear him. Following the example of St. Bernard, of whom it was said, *Solitudinem cordis circumferens ubique solus erat,* ("Taking with him the solitude of his own heart he was everywhere alone") the apostle keeps apart from others and makes for himself an interior solitude ; but people realise that he is not alone, that there is in his heart a mysterious and intimate guest to converse with whom he returns within himself at every moment ; and he speaks only by His direction, His advice, His orders. People feel that he is sustained and guided by Him, and that the words, which issue from his lips are but the faithful echo of those of this interior Word : *as the words of God.*[2] It is then not so much the logic and the force of his arguments which appeal* in his speech as the interior Word, the teaching Word, *Verbum docens,* speaking by His creature : *The words*

1. Virtus de illo exibat et sanabat omnes (Luc., VI, 19
2. Quasi sermones Dei (I Petr., IV, 11).

that I speak to you, I speak not of myself. But the Father who abideth in me, he doth the works.[1] The influence of such words is deep and lasting, much deeper by far than the superficial admiration, or the passing devotion that may be produced in others by the man who has no interior spirit. Such a one may induce his hearer to say, "This seems interesting and true." But that is merely a feeling quite powerless in itself to lead a man to supernatural faith and make that faith live in his soul.

Brother Gabriel, the Trappist lay brother,[2] by merely carrying out his duties as assistant guestmaster, did more to revivify the faith of countless visitors than could a learned priest, whose words might appeal less to the heart than to the mind. General de Miribel came frequently to talk to the humble brother and loved to say, "I have just been strengthening my faith."

Never perhaps has there been so much preaching, discussion, and writing of learned treatises of apologetics as in our day; and never perhaps, judging by the great bulk of the faithful, has the faith been less alive. Too often those whose mission is to teach seem to see in an act of faith only an act of the intellect, whereas it depends also on the will. They forget that belief is a supernatural gift and that there is a deep gulf betw'een merely perceiving the motives of credibility and making a definite act of faith. God alone and the good will of the one who is being taught can bridge this gulf; but the divine light reflected by the holiness of the teacher helps much in doing so.

He radiates hope.—It would be impossible for a man given to mental prayer not to radiate hope; his faith has firmly established him in the conviction that happiness is to be found in God and in God alone. With what firm assurance then can he speak of heaven! What abundant

1. Verba quae ego loquor vobis, a meipso non loquor. Pater autem in me manens, ipse facit opera (Joan., XIV, io).

2. The life of this French captain of dragoons who in 1870 at the battle of Gravelotte made a vow to enter the Trappists, and who refused to be anything but a lay brother, is related in that fine book, *Du champ de bataille à la Trappe* (Perrin et Co., edit. Paris).

resources he has to console the afflicted! The best of all means to win the ear of men is to offer them the secret of carrying joyfully the Cross, the lot of every mortal. This secret lies in the Blessed Eucharist and in the hope of heaven.

How sincere are the words of consolation uttered by a man who can with truth apply to himself the words, *Our conversation is in heaven.*[1] Someone else may speak with fine phrases and colourful rhetoric about the joys of our heavenly home; his discourse will have no effect. A few convincing words from the interior soul, revealing the state of mind of him who utters them, will be able to calm the grief, soothe the sorrow, and cause even the keenest suffering to be accepted with resignation.

From the man of interior spirit the virtue of hope is irresistibly communicated to a soul in which perhaps it had never been enkindled before, and which was on the point of being engulfed in despair.

He radiates charity.—To possess charity is the great ambition of a soul that aspires to become holy. The interpenetration of Jesus and the soul, expressed in the words, "he that abideth in Me and I in him," is the aim and object of the man of interior life.

Experienced preachers are unanimous in declaring that though the sermons on death, judgment, and hell are indispensable, or always useful at the beginning of a retreat or a mission, the instruction on the love of Our Lord produces as a rule a more beneficial impression. When it is preached by a true missionary capable of conveying to his audience the feelings with which he is filled, it guarantees the success of the retreat and leads to many conversions.

When there is question of detaching a soul from sin or of leading one from fervour to perfection, the love of Our Lord remains the best means of all. The Christian who has sunk deep in the mire, but who is still capable of sensing in another *a burning love enkindled by invisible*i.

i. Nostra conversatio in caelis est (Phil., III, 20).

realities, and who on the other hand reflects on the disappointments and emptiness of earthly love, begins to feel an aversion from sin. He has understood something of God, something of the immense love of Our Lord for His creature. He has felt within him a stirring of the hidden grace of his baptism and his first communion. Jesus has been shown to him living and real, for the tenderness of His Heart has appeared through the face and the voice of His minister. The sinner has caught sight of another love that is noble, pure, glowing, and he has said to himself: "It *is* possible after all even here on this earth to love with a love which transcends the love of creatures."

After closer manifestations of the God of Love through His herald, the soul will rise from the quicksands into which it was being sucked down and it will no longer dread the sacrifices necessary to acquire the treasure of divine love which hitherto had been almost unknown in its life.

Although this is not the place to develop this point further, we can see how the love of God may increase and hence what progress the true pastor can ensure in souls already freed from sin or already fervent. Even those who are not priests can by their ardent charity produce in the hearts of those around them this most excellent of the theological virtues.

He radiates kindness.—"A zeal that is not charitable," says St. Francis de Sales, "comes from a charity that is not genuine." By tasting in mental prayer the sweetness of Him whom the Church calls an ocean of kindness, *bonitatis oceanus,* a soul soon undergoes a great transformation. Even if it is by nature disposed to selfishness or harshness, all these defects will disappear little by little. By nourishing his soul on Him in whom appeared the goodness of God to the world, *When the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared,*[1] on Him who is the image and adequate expression of the divine Goodness, *the image of His goodness,*[2] the apostle shares in the bounty of God

1. Benignitas et humanitas apparuit Salvatoris nostri Dei (Tit., III, 4).
2. Imago bonitatis illius (Sap., VII, 26).

and feels the need of being like Him, *diffusivus,* spreading kindness.

The more a soul is united to Our Lord, the more it shares in the dominant quality of the divine and human Heart of the Redeemer ; His kindness, forbearance, benevolence, pity, are all multiplied a hundredfold in such a soul and its generosity and devotedness will be earned to the limits of joyous and magnanimous self-sacrifice.

Transfigured by divine love the apostle will have no trouble in winning the sympathy of souls. *In the goodness and readiness of his soul he appeased God for Israel.*[1] His words and his acts will be marked with kindness, a kindness quite disinterested, quite unlike that inspired by the desire of popularity or by subtle selfishness.

" God has wished," wrote Lacordaire, " that no good can be done to man except by loving him, and that want of feeling must ever be incapable either of giving him light for his path, or of inspiring him to virtue." And the fact is that when force is imposed on him, man takes glory in resisting ; we make it a point of honour to raise objections against the wisdom that seeks to browbeat everyone into submitting to its own point of view ; but because we do not feel any humiliation in being disarmed by kindness, we willingly yield to the charm of its influence.

The Little Sister of the Poor, the Little Sister of the x^ssumption, the Sister of Charity would be able to mention a vast number of conversions brought about without any discussion, solely by the power of unwearied and oftentimes heroic kindness.

" God is there," cries the unbeliever or the sinner, in the presence of such self-sacrifice ; " I see Him, and see that He is what He is called, the good God." And He must indeed be good, since intercourse with Him renders so frail a being as man capable of crushing his love of self and of silencing the most natural dislikes.

These angels on earth fulfil the definition of Father

1. In bonitate et alacritate animi placuit Deo pro Israël (Eccli., XLV, 29).

Faber: "Kindness is the overflow of self on others. To be kind is to put others in one's place. Kindness has converted more sinners than zeal, eloquence, or learning, and these three things have never converted anybody without kindness having something to do with it. In a word kindness makes us as gods towards one another. It is the manifestation of this feeling in apostolic men which draws sinners to them and brings them thus to their conversion."

And he adds: "Everywhere kindness shows itself the best pioneer of the Precious Blood . . . Without doubt, the fear of the Lord is frequently the beginning of that wisdom, which we call conversion; but we must frighten men kindly, for otherwise fear will only make infidels . . ."[1] "*Have* a mother's heart," says St. Vincent Ferrer; "whether you have to encourage or terrify, show to all men a heart of tender charity, and let the sinner feel that it inspires your words. If you wish to be useful to souls, begin by appealing to God with all your heart, that He may lavish on you that charity which is the summing up of all the virtues, so that by it you may reach effectually the end that you have in view."[2]

There is all the difference in the world between natural kindness, which is the simple result of our temperament, and the supernatural kindness of the soul of an apostle. The former may evoke respect, even sympathy for the evangelic worker and at times cause an affection which should belong only to God to be turned aside to a creature. It will never succeed in inducing souls really to make for God the sacrifices that are necessary if they are to return to their Creator. The kindness which flows from intimacy with Jesus can alone bring about this result.

Ardent love of Our Lord and a desire for the true direction of souls give to the apostle all the daring compatible with tact and prudence. An eminent layman told me that while conversing with Saint Pius X, he had let slip some biting words against an enemy of the Church. "My son,"

1. *Spiritual Conferences.*
2. *Traité de la Vie Spirituelle,* II, p., c. X.

said the Pope, " I do not approve of your language. For your penance listen to this story. A priest well known to me arrived at his first parish. He thought it his duty to visit every family including Jews, Protestants, and even Freemasons. Then he announced from the pulpit that each year he would repeat his visits. Great excitement broke out among his confrères, and they complained to the Bishop. The latter immediately sent for the culprit and gave him a sharp reprimand. ' My Lord,' answered the parish priest modestly, ' Our Lord in the Gospel orders the shepherd to bring into the fold all his sheep, *them also I must bring,*[1] How can I succeed in this without going to look for them ? Besides I never compromise on principles ; I limit myself to showing my interest and my charity to all the souls that God has entrusted to me even to those who have gone astray. I have announced these visits from the pulpit ; if it is your formal desire that I give them up, kindly put it in writing for me so that people may know that I am only obeying your orders/ Moved by the justice of this appeal, the Bishop did not insist. And in any case the future proved that the priest was right, for he had the joy of converting some of those lost sheep and inspired the others with a great respect for our holy religion. This humble parish priest has become by the will of God the Pope who is now giving you, my son, this lesson in charity. Be then steadfast as to principle, but let your charity extend to all men, even to the worst enemies of the Church/'

He radiates humility.—It is easy to understand how the kindness and the gentleness of Our Lord attracted people to Him in crowds. Can we attribute the same power to His humility ? We need have no doubt about it.

Without me you can do nothing.[2] Raised by the Creator to the dignity of co-operator, the apostle will become a doer of supernatural works, but only *on condition that Jesus alone appear as the One who really does them.* The more the apostle can efface himself and become impersonal,

1. Oportet illas adducere (Joan., X, 16).
2. Sine me nihil potestis facere (Joan., XV, 5).

the more surely will Our Lord take care to show Himself. Without this impersonal quality which is a result of the interior life, the apostle will plant and will water in vain ; nothing will grow.

True humility has a special charm of which Our Lord is the source ; it breathes forth the *Divine.* In proportion to the zeal that His minister shows in effacing himself, in order that Jesus alone may seem to act, Our Lord will give him ever greater power to win the hearts of men. *He must increase but I must decrease.*[1]

Thus humility becomes one of the greatest means of converting souls. " Believe me," said St. Vincent de Paul to his priests, " we shall never be fit to do the work of God, if we are not convinced that of ourselves we are better fitted to ruin everything than to succeed."

You may be astonished that we come back so often to the same ideas. The reason is that their mere repetition will impress them on the minds of our readers and show their importance.

Arrogant behaviour, self-satisfied airs, often play a great part in the failure of our ministry.

The " modern " Catholic means to keep his independence. He will be ready to obey God, *but God alone.* From the minister of God he will accept advice, directions, orders even, but only on condition that he sees on them the stamp of God.

To have that the apostle must learn to efface himself and by the practice of humility disappear from view to such an extent that those who look at him see right through him to God, so to speak. And thus he will manifest the truth of the Master's words, *He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. But be you not called Rabbi . . . neither be you called masters.*[2]

The mere outward appearance of the man of interior life can teach men a lesson in *the science of life,* which is *the*

1. Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui (Joan., III, 30).
2. Qui major est vestrum erit minister vester. Vos autem nolite vocari Rabbi, nec vocemini magistri (Matt., XXIII, 11 & 8).

science of prayer.[1] Why? Because by this humility he reveals his dependence on God. And this dependence to which his soul holds fast, shows itself continually by his habit of having recourse to God on every occasion; either in order to come to a decision, or to seek consolation in difficulties, or else to get sufficient strength to overcome them.

In the Common of Confessors not Pontiffs in the Divine Office the priest reads the words in which St. Bede comments so remarkably on the text, "Little flock," *Pusillus grex.* "The Saviour," he says, "calls the flock of the elect *little,* either because He contrasts it with the multitude of the lost, or better still, because of His great zeal for humility; for however numerous or extended His Church may already have become, He still wishes it to *increase* in humility till the end of the world and thus attain to the kingdom promised to the humble."[2]

This opinion is drawn from the cogent lessons given by Our Lord to His Apostles when for instance they wished to make use, for their personal advantages, of their vocation to the apostolate and showed themselves on that occasion so full of ambition and jealousy. *You know,* He said, *that the princes of the gentiles lord it over them; and they that are the greater exercise power upon them. It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you let him be your minister; and he that will be the first among you shall be your servant.*[3]

"But," asks Bourdaloue, "would not authority be weakened by such action? There will always be enough authority among you, if there is enough humility; and if humility is lost, authority becomes an intolerable burden."

Without true humility the apostle will fall into one of two extremes: it will be a matter either of excessive, easy-going familiarity, or more likely of domineering over everyone else.

1. St. Augustine.
2. Hom. of St. Bede the Ven., book IV, chap. LIV on St. Luke, XII.
3. Matt., XX, 25-27.

Leaving questions of doctrine to one side, let us suppose that the apostle is sufficiently well informed to avoid both unlimited tolerance on the one hand and harshness of zeal on the other, the excesses of which would be displeasing to God. His principles may be perfectly sound and his knowledge exact. This granted, we still affirm that without humility the apostle cannot hold a middle course between the two extremes, and that weakness, or more often pride, will be shown in his conduct.

On the one hand, giving way to a false humility, he will be timid and allow' his spirit of charity to degenerate into weakness ; he will be ready to make exaggerated concessions, to seek reconciliations at any price, and his zeal for maintaining his principles wall disappear on countless pretexts ; he wall sacrifice them for reasons of prudence dictated by short-sighted views.

Or else on the other hand, natural feeling and misdirection of the will may bring into play his pride, his touchiness, his *Ego.* There will follow' personal dislikes, assertion of authority, malice, spite, rivalry, antipathy, partiality, cupidity, retaliation, ambition, jealousy, the natural desire of being first, calumny, backbiting, worldly partisanship, harshness in defending principles, and so on.

Instead of remaining the true *end* in pursuit of which our passions become noble, the glory of God will be reduced by such an apostle to the level of a *means* and a *pretext* to support, encourage and excuse these same passions on their too human side. The slightest attack upon the glory of God or upon the Church will bring about outbursts of anger in which the psychologist will be able to discern the w'ounded pride of the apostolic worker, jealous of the privileges of his caste as a *merely human society,* instead of that devotion to the casue of God, which is the sole reason for the existence of the Church in as much as it is *a perfect Society established by Our Lord.*

Correct doctrine and good judgment will not be enough to preserve him from these errors, because the apostle with no interior life and therefore with no true humility will be at the mercy of his passions. Humility alone, by keeping

his judgment sound and preventing him from acting on impulse, will bring more balance and steadiness into his life. By uniting him to God it will make him share, so to speak, in the changelessness of God. Thus the frail ivy becomes strong and stable with the unshaken strength of the oak when, with all its fibres, it clings to the sturdy trunk of this king of the forests.

Do not hesitate then to recognise that without humility, if we do not fall into the first excess, our nature will carry us away to the second ; or else we shall drift with the tide, sometimes towards one, sometimes towards the other, according to circumstances or to our passions. Thus will be realised the truth of what St. Thomas says : " Man is a fickle creature, constant only in his inconstancy."[1]

The logical result of an apostolate so imperfect is either that men will despise a weak authority, or else mistrust and even detest an authority which does not bear the stamp of God.

He radiates firmness and gentleness.—The saints have often been very outspoken against error, the contagion of bad example, and hypocrisy. St. Bernard, the oracle of his age, may be quoted, it would seem, as one of the saints whose zeal has shown the most firmness. But on reading his life attentively the reader can distinguish to what an extent his interior fife had rendered this man of God impersonal and unselfish. He never had recourse to severity till he had made sure by evidence that all other means had failed. Often too he alternates between gentleness and severity ; after having, to maintain principles, shown a holy indignation and insisted on atonement, reparation, guarantees, and promises, we see him through his great love for souls devote himself at once with a mother's gentleness to the conversion of those whom his conscience had obliged him to oppose. Pitiless towards the errors of /Xbélard, he soon managed to make a friend of the man he had conquered and reduced to silence.

When it was a question of choosing means and there was no principle involved, he became a champion to prevent Churchmen from having recourse to violent precedure.

Learning that the Jews of Germany were going to be ruined and massacred, without hesitation he abandoned his cloister to hasten to their defence and preached a crusade of peace. And so in a noteworthy document, which Father Ratisbon quotes in his *Life of St. Bernard,* the chief Rabbi of that country declares his admiration for the monk of Clairvaux. " Were it not for him," he says " not one of us would be left alive in Germany." And he implores future generations of Jews never to forget the debt of gratitude they owe to the holy Abbot. St. Bernard said on this occasion, " We are the soldiers of peace, we are the army of the peacemakers, fighting for God and peace: *Deo et paci militantibus.* Persuasion, good example, loyalty to God are the only weapons worthy of the children of the Gospel."

There is no substitute for the interior life as a means of producing that unselfish spirit which characterises the zeal of the saints.

In the Chablais district of the Alps all efforts to restore Catholicism failed until the arrival of St. Francis de Sales. The Protestant leaders were prepared for a desperate struggle; they aimed at nothing less than the murder of the Bishop of Geneva; but he presented himself among them radiating gentleness and humility. They saw in him a man whose self-effacement showed forth his love of God and of his neighbour. History tells of the rapid and almost incredible results produced by his apostolate.

But even the gentle St. Francis de Sales knew when he had to display inexorable severity. He did not hesitate to invoke the force of human law to confirm the results gained by the gentleness of his words and the example of bis virtues. Therefore it was that the holy Bishop advised the Duke of Savoy to take severe measures against those heretics who went back on their agreements.

The saints only copied their Master. In the Gospel the Saviour appears to us receiving sinners with mercy, as the friend of Zaccheus and the publicans, full of kindness for the sick, for the suffering and for children. And yet He who was gentleness and kindliness incarnate, did not hesitate to take a whip to drive the sellers from the Temple;

and what severe and powerful words he uses when He speaks of Herod or castigates the vices of the scribes and the hypocritical pharisees !

But it is only in certain very' rare cases, after having employed in vain all other means or when there is convincing evidence that they would be useless, that one may reluctantly have recourse to drastic procedure, out of charity and to prevent the spread of evil.

With these exceptions and when principles are not at stake, meekness should direct the conduct of the Gospel worker. " You catch more flies," says St. Francis de Sales, " with a little honey than with a barrel of vinegar."

We may remember here how Our Saviour rebuked His apostles, when they were hurt and humiliated in their personal dignity, and allowed themselves to be led by a zeal that was neither pure nor disinterested to seek violent means, demanding that fire from heaven might come down on the village of Samaria which had refused to receive them. *You know not,* He said, *of what spirit you are.*[1]

A French Bishop, whose firmness in defence of principle is often quoted as an example, went through his diocese visiting those families which had lost one or more members in World War I. Making himself all things to all men, he went to offer his sympathy to a Calvinist who was mourning his son killed on the field of honour, and spoke to him a few heartfelt and touching words. Moved by this small act of charity, the Protestant afterwards declared, " Is it possible that a Bishop so noble by his birth and distinguished by his learning has deigned in spite of our difference in religion to cross the threshold of my poor little house ? What he has done and said has touched my heart." The manufacturer, in whose employment the man was, added when telling the story : "To my mind this Protestant is halfway to conversion, and in any case the Bishop by bis kindness has advanced his conversion much more than by the use of endless and animated discussion." This pastor of souls gave evidence of the gentleness of Ouri.

1. Luc., IX, 55.

Lord. The Protestant saw, so to speak, Our Saviour before him and has been forced to admit to himself: "A Church which has Bishops who so truly reflect Him whom I admire in the Gospel, must be the true Church."

The interior life keeps both the mind and the will, at the same time, in the service of the Gospel. Neither laziness, nor violence can hinder the advance of a soul which sees and acts according to the Heart of Jesus. It shows prudence and ardour only when urged by this adorable Heart; that is the secret of its success.

On the other hand, where the interior life is lacking, there follow displays of human passions which explain why we are so often defeated.

He radiates mortification.—The spirit of mortification is another principle which makes for the success of good works. Everything is summed up in the Cross. As *long as we have not made the mystery of the Cross sink deeply into the souls of men, we have only touched them superficially.* But who can get people to accept a mystery, which is repugnant to that dread of suffering so natural to the human heart? Only those who can say with the great Apostle, *With Christ I am nailed to the Cross,*[1] only those, who carry in themselves Jesus mortified: *Always bearing about in our body, the mortification of Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.*[2][3] To mortify oneself is to reproduce the *Christ who did not please Himself* to renounce one's self under all circumstances, to contrive to love what does not please, to tend to the ideal of being a victim immolated at every moment of the day.

Now it is impossible without the interior life to uproot our most deeply planted instincts in this way.

While the Poor Man of Assisi, walking in silence through the streets of the city, could preach the mystery of the Cross by his mere appearance, the unmortified apostle

1. Christo confixus sum cruci (Gal., II, 19).
2. Semper mortificationem Jesu in corpore nostro circumferentes ut vita Jesu manifestetur in corporibus nostris (II Cor., IV, 10).
3. Christus sibi non placuit (Rom., XV, 3).

wastes his time preaching Calvary, even if he borrows from Bossuet to do so. The world is so firmly entrenched in the spirit of pleasure that, to demolish its citadel, ordinary arguments, nay even grand and imposing concepts are not sufficient. What is wanted is the *Passion brought home* to people by the mortification and detachment of the minister of God.

Enemies of the Cross of Christ,[1] St. Paul would say of these numerous Christians who see in religion only a kind of fashionable conformity, a habit of exterior practices, handed down by tradition and periodically performed, with respect, it is time, but without any relation to the amendment of one's life, the fight against one's passions or the introduction of the Gospel spirit into one's way of life. These people seem to honour me, Our Lord might say; *they honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.*[2]

Enemies of the cross of Christ, those week-kneed Christians who consider it necessary to surround themselves with every comfort, to give in to every demand made by the world, to seek inordinate pleasures, to follow with passionate interest all the latest fashions. Such people are shocked by Christ's words which they do not understand any longer; and yet Our Lord has said for the benefit of all men: *Except you do penance, you shall all likewise perish.*[3] The cross according to the expression of St. Paul has become to them *a stumbling block*.[4]

And yet how is the apostle going to produce other Christians, if he himself has no interior life?

Crowded congregations flocking to his various services will gratify, no doubt, the heart of the true priest; but it will give no real satisfaction, if he must attribute their presence merely to custom, to a respectable fidelity to family tradition, to certain habits which do not upset the daily routine;

1. Inimicos crucis Christi (Philipp., III, 18).
2. Populus hic labiis me honorat, cor autem eorum longe est a me (Matt., XV, 8).
3. Si paenitentiam non egeritis, omnes similiter peribitis (Luc., XIII, 5).
4. Scandalum (I Cor., I, 23).

or if he finds that it is caused by the pleasure people take in hearing good music, in seeing fine Church decoration, or in assisting at a brilliant display of oratory, of which they admire only the form and style.

Far be it from me to think of undervaluing the least trace of Christian life, however small it may be. On the contrary the object of these pages is to deplore our lamentable incapacity, through want of interior life, to produce anything except rather poor results, even if these are not altogether negligible.

Our Lord wants only our heart. To conquer our heart, to possess our will, and to inspire us to follow Him in the path of self-denial, that is the reason why He came to reveal to man the sublime mysteries of the faith.

The apostle, accustomed to the interior life, which is based on the words of Our Lord, *Let him deny himself,*[1] will be successful in producing this self-denial in others. But he who only follows from afar Our Saviour carrying His cross will be quite incapable of producing such a result. Nobody gives what he does not possess: *Nemo dat quod non habet.* Slothful himself in imitating Jesus crucified, how can he preach to his people that holy war against their passions to which Our Lord invites us?

Only the apostle who is disinterested, humble, and chaste, can lead souls into the battle against the ever increasing forces of greed, ambition and impurity. Only he who knows the science of the crucifix will be powerful enough to check this continual seeking after comfort, this worship of pleasure which threatens to undermine and sweep away families and whole nations.

To teach Christ crucified! Thus does St. Paul sum up his apostolate. And because he lived in Christ and in Christ crucified, he was able to persuade people to accept the mystery of the Cross and to teach them to live by it. Too many apostles of to-day have not enough interior life to fathom this life-giving mystery, to fill themselves with it, to radiate it. They look at religion too much from its philosophical,i.

1. Abneget semetipsum (Matt., XVI, 24).

social, or even aesthetic point of view, aspects which appeal only to the mind and excite only the emotions and imagination. They develop a tendency to see in religion above all a school of sublime poetry, and of incomparable art. No doubt religion possesses these qualities, but to look at it only from these secondary points of view would be to distort the economy of the Gospel, to put as the end w'hat is only the means. It is a sort of sacrilege to make a kind of fashionable Christ of the Christ of Gethsemani, of the Pretorium, of Calvary. Ever since Adam sinned, penance, reparation, spiritual combat have become indispensable conditions of human life ; the cross of Jesus Christ reminds us of this at every turn. To get admirers does not satisfy the zeal of the Incarnate Word for His Father's glory ; He must have imitators.

In his encyclical of November ist, 1914, Benedict XV invited true apostles to put their hands to the plough more earnestly than ever in order to snatch souls from love of ease, from a selfish life, from flippant tastes, and from their forgetfulness of things eternal. This was an appeal to all the ministers of the divine Victim to lead an interior life.

God, who has given us so much, asks that from the age of reason the Christian should unite to the Precious Blood and Passion of Our Lord something of his own, what we might call the blood of one's soul, that is the sacrifices necessary for the observance of the law of God. How can the faithful be inspired to make these generous sacrifices of goods, pleasures, and honours, unless by the example of a director of souls who has made himself familiar with the spirit of sacrifice ?

Where are we to look for the salvation of our society, we anxiously ask when we see the repeated victories of the infernal enemy ? When will it be the turn of the Church to win a battle or two ? With the Master it is easy to answer; *This kind is not cast· out but by prayer and fasting.*[1] It will be the turn of the Church when from the ranks of

I. Hoc autem genus non ejicitur nisi per orationem et jejunium (Matt., XVII, 20).

the clergy and the religious orders there will come forth a body of mortified men *showing forth among the people the splendour of the Cross;* and the nations of the earth, beholding in the priest or the religious given to mortification how reparation is made for the sins of the world, will understand the Redemption by the Blood of Our Saviour. Then and not till then will the army of Satan draw back and the anguished cry of our outraged Lord, finding at length souls willing to make reparation for sin, will no longer echo through the ages: *And I sought among them for a man that might set up a hedge, and stand in the gap before me in favour of the land, that I might not destroy it: and I found none.*[1]

Some one has tried to find out why a single sign of the Cross from Father de Ravignan produced so apparently magical an effect on indifferent Catholics and even on unbelievers, who came to hear him from mere curiosity.

The conclusion he drew from the answers of many of the hearers was that *the preacher's austerity of life* was shown in a striking manner by this sign of the cross, which united him to the mystery of Calvary.

(d) It makes the gospel worker truly eloquent.

What we mean of course is that eloquence which is capable of bringing with it enough grace to convert souls and lead them to virtue. We have already spoken of it incidentally. We shall add just a few words here.

In the Office of St. John, we read this response: "Reclining on the breast of the Lord, he *drank in from the sacred fountain* itself of the heart of the Lord the fluency of his Gospel and he *spread the grace of the word of God over the whole world.*"[2] What a profound lesson there is in these

1. Et quaesivi de eis -varum, qui interponeret sepem et staret oppositus contra me pro terra, ne dissiparem eam, et non inveni (Ezech., XXII, 30).

2. Supra pectus Domini recumbens, Evangelii fluenta de ipso sacro Dominici pectoris fonte potavit et verbi Dei gratiam in toto terrarum orbe diffudit.

words for all those preachers, writers, and catechists, whose duty it is to spread abroad the word of God! Does not the Church in these remarkable words reveal to her priests the source of true eloquence.

All the Evangelists are equally inspired; all have their purpose assigned by Providence. Nevertheless each has his own special eloquence. More than the others St. John has the power to reach the will by filling our hearts with *the grace of the word of God*. His Gospel along with the Epistles of St. Paul is the book preferred by those souls for whom life here below is meaningless unless it is united to Jesus Christ.

Whence does St. John derive the charm of his captivating eloquence? In what mountain is the source of that river, whose waters spread their bounty over the whole earth, *Fluenta in toto terrarum orbe diffudit?* He is one of the rivers of Paradise, says the liturgical text: *Quasi unus ex Paradisi fluminibus Evangelista Joannes.*

What is the use of so many huge mountains and glaciers on the face of the earth? Would not these immense surfaces, an ignorant man might say, be much more useful, if they were spread out in fertile plains? He has not the slightest notion that without these lofty summits plains and valleys would be as barren as the Sahara. For it is the mountains that give the plains their fertility by means of the rivers whose sources they are.

This lofty peak of Paradise, whence flowed the springs which feed the Gospel of St. John, is nothing but the Heart of Our Lord; *Evangeliifluenta de ipso sacro Dominici pectoris fonte potavit.* It is because the Evangelist by the interior Life has felt the throbbing of the Heart of the Man-God and the immensity of His love for men, that his word is the channel of the grace of the word of God: *Verbi Dei gratiam diffudit.*

In the same way we may say that men of interior spirit are also in a sense rivers of paradise. Not only do they by their prayers and their sacrifices draw down upon earth the living waters of grace or mitigate the punishments which the world deserves; but also by ascending to the

height of heaven they draw the fountains of life from the Heart of Him in whom dwells the inward life of God, and distribute them more abundantly on the souls of men : *You shall draw waters out of the Saviour's fountains.*[1] Called to give forth the word of God they do so with an eloquence of which they alone possess the secret. They speak of Heaven to the earth. They bring light, warmth, consolation, and strength. Without all these qualities together, there is no complete eloquence ; and the preacher will not combine all of them unless he lives in Jesus.

Am I really one of those who depend on their mental prayer, their visits to the Blessed Sacrament, their Mass or communion above all, to lend real moving power to their preaching ? If not, I may be a loud " tinkling cymbal," I may give forth the pompous resonance of brass ;[2] but I am not the channel of divine love, and mine is not the irresistible eloquence of the friends of God.

The picture of Christian life as painted by a preacher endowed with learning but of indifferent piety may move souls, bring them nearer to God, even increase their faith ; but to fill them with the life-giving savour of virtue, one must have tasted the true spirit of the Gospel and by mental prayer have made it the substance of one's life.[3]

Let me repeat that only the Holy Ghost, the principle of all spiritual fruitfulness, can make converts and bestow' the graces which cause men to avoid vice and practise virtue. The words of the apostle when filled with the unction of the Sanctifying Spirit, become a living channel,

1. Haurietis aquas de fontibus Salvatoris (Is., XII, 3).
2. Aes sonans, cymbalum tinniens (I Cor., XIII, 1).
3. Nec enim assueti cum Deo colloqui, quum de eo ad homines dicunt vel consilia Christianae vitae impertiunt, prorsus carent divino afflatu ; ut evangelicum verbum videatur in ipsis fere intermortuum. Vox eorum quantavis prudentiae vel facundiae laude clarescat, vocem minime reddit Pastoris boni, quam oves salutariter audiant ; strepit enim diffluitque inanis (St. Pius X, *Exort. ad clerum cath.*, 4 Aug. 1908).

This exhortation, which the paternal heart of St. Pius X addressed to the ministers of God is a touching appeal for priestly holiness. It shows its necessity and its nature, and in a series of practical suggestions points out the means of acquiring and preserving it.

which holds back nothing of the divine action. Before Pentecost the Apostles had preached almost without any result. After their ten days' retreat given entirely to the interior Life, the Spirit of God poured in on them and transformed them. Their first attempts at preaching were miraculous draughts of fishes. It will be the same with the sowers of the Gospel; by the interior Life they will become true Christ-bearers; they will plant and sow with success; the Holy Ghost will give the increase. Their words will be at the same time both the seed which falls and the rain which fertilizes; the sun which ripens and never fails.

"To give light alone is useless," said St. Bernard, "and heat alone is not much either, but light and heat together are perfection." And further on: "It is especially to apostles and to apostolic men that it is said, *Let your light shine before men:* for such as these ought indeed to be ardent, very ardent." 1

The apostle derives his eloquence in preaching not only from his life of union with Our Lord by mental prayer and custody of the heart, but also from the Sacred Scriptures, which he will study with great zeal. Every word of God to man, every word fallen from the lips of Jesus is for him a diamond, whose facets he admires by the light of the gift of wisdom so specially developed in him. But *as it is only after prayer* that he opens the inspired book, he not only *admires* but *relishes* its teachings, just as if the Holy Ghost had dictated them for him personally. With what unction then will he from the pulpit quote the word of God, and what a difference there will be between the light of truth that he draws from it and the ingenious or learned applications worked out by a preacher who has no other resources than reason and an abstract half-dead faith! The former will show' the living truth, surrounding the soul with a reality which will not only enlighten but give life. The latter isi.

1. Est tantum lucere vanum, tantum ardere parum, ardere et lucere perfectum . . . Singulariter apostolis et apostolicis viris dicitur: Luceat lux vestra coram hominibus nimirum tanquam accensis et vehementer accensis *(Sevm. on St. John the Baptist).*

only able to talk of truth as if it were an algebraical equation, certain of course, but cold and unrelated to the inmost realities of our life. He leaves truth in the abstract state and, so to speak, makes it a simple record, or at most something that may touch our hearts by virtue of what is called the æsthetic side of Christianity. "The majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the simplicity of the Gospel speaks to my heart," admitted the sentimentalist, J. J. Rousseau. But how did these vague and fruitless feelings concern the glory of God? The true apostle, on the contrary, knows how to bring out not only the truth of the Gospel, but the reality of that truth which is always active and continually renewed in the soul which is in contact with it. Without stopping to move the feelings he goes by the word of divine life until he reaches the will where resides true conformity with the life of Christ. The convictions which he produces beget love and determination. He alone has the true secret of preaching the Gospel.

No interior life is complete without tender devotion to Mary Immaculate, pre-eminently the channel of all graces. The true apostle always has recourse to Mary, a devotion which St. Bernard could never conceive as being lacking in a true son of that peerless Mother; and when such an apostle treats of the dogmas of the Mother of God and of men, he will speak with a warmth that not only interests his hearers and deeply moves them, but also excites in them a desire to fly in all their troubles to this Mediatrix of the graces won for us by the Precious Blood. He has only to let his experience and his heart speak and he will gain souls for the Queen of Heaven and through her place them in the Heart of Jesus.

(e) Because the interior Life begets interior life, its results on souls are deep and lasting.

This chapter ought to take the place of a special appeal to each of our confrères.

I have considered good works as depending above all on the interior Life of the apostle; prayer and reflection have

led me to analyse from another point of view the failure or indifferent success of certain good works, and I think I am perfectly justified in making this statement :

No work takes deep root, or is really solid and lasting, unless the apostle has created the interior Life in other souls. Now he cannot do this, unless he himself is well nourished by his own interior life.

In chapter HI of Part 2 I quoted the words of Canon Timon-David on the necessity of training, in each work of Catholic Action, a group of fervent Christians who in turn would carry on a true apostolate among their comrades. It is easy to see how valuable is this leaven, and to what extent these *co-workers* can multiply the power of an apostle's action. He no longer works alone ; his means of doing good are multiplied a hundredfold.

Let me repeat it is only the really interior man who has *enough life to produce other centres of fruitful life.* Any purely worldly enterprise can succeed in getting zealous workers who will spread propaganda and influence by comradeship, whether prompted by brotherly spirit or rivalry. In such a case fanaticism or competition, sectarianism or vain-glory, interest or ambition are all that is needed to stir them to action. But by what other means than that of intensive interior life can we create apostles for Our Lord, apostles who share His gentleness and humility, His disinterested kindness and His exclusive zeal for the glory of His Father ?

As long as an enterprise has not been able to produce such results its existence is shortlived. It is almost certain that it will not survive its founder. But the reason of the endurance of certain other works, on the contrary, is without doubt to be found in the single fact that interior life has been able to beget more interior life. Let me give an example.

Father Allemand, who died in the odour of sanctity, founded at Marseilles before the Revolution a club for students and workers. This club still bears the name of its founder and continues after more than a century to enjoy remarkable success. Nevertheless this priest was

little gifted by nature; he was very shortsighted, shy, a poor speaker; humanly speaking he was incapable of the enormous activity which his enterprise called for.

The ugliness of his features would naturally have provoked ricicule from his young men but for the beauty of his soul which was reflected in his look and in his demeanour. Thanks to this, the man of God gained a great ascendancy over these high-spirited youths by which he dominated them and won their respect, esteem and affection. Fr. Allemand wished to build only on the interior life and succeeded in forming as the nucleus of his work, a group of young men, from whom he did not hesitate to demand in the fullest measure that their condition allowed, a complete interior life, perfect custody of the heart, morning mental prayer, etc. In a word, he asked for the whole Christian life as understood and practised by the early Christians.

And these young apostles, succeeding one another, have continued at Marseilles to be the soul of this movement, which has given to the Church several bishops and continues to give her many secular priests, missionaries, religious and thousands of fathers of families, who are the chief support of the most important parish works in Marseilles, and form in it a group which not only does honour to commerce, industry and the liberal professions, but constitutes a real centre of the apostolate.

Fathers of families, we have just said. That brings to mind the burden of the refrain that is heard nearly everywhere: "The apostolate is relatively easy in the case of young men and married women, but it is often impossible when we want to apply it to grown men. And yet as long as we have not succeeded in getting the heads of families to become not only Christians, but apostles in their turn, the valuable influence of Christian mothers will be paralysed or short-lived, and we shall never manage to lay the foundation of the social kingdom of Christ on a firm basis. Now in such and such a parish, suburb, hospital or factory, nothing can be done to induce the men to become thoroughly Christian."

When we thus admit our helplessness, do we not as a

rule display our lack of true interior life, which alone would enable us to discover the means of preventing so many men from escaping from the influence of the Church ? Do we not prefer the easy preaching that is so successful with young men and women to the hard work of carefully preparing sermons capable of producing conviction, love and lasting resolutions in the hearts and minds of men ? The interior life alone can sustain our courage in the back-breaking and obscure labour of sowing the seed that seems to remain so long without fruit. Only the interior life can make us understand how much active power is to be derived from the labour of prayer and penance, and how our progress in the imitation of all the virtues of Our Lord will multiply the power of our apostolate over men.

So surprised was I at the account I was given about the success of a soldiers' club in one of our big towns that I hesitated to believe it. For instance, how was it possible that the soldiers would come in far greater numbers for a long evening of adoration in order to atone for the blasphemy and debauchery of the barracks, than for a concert or a play ? I had to give in before the evidence. My surprise vanished when I was informed to what a degree the chaplain was devoted to the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament and what fervent apostles he had thus been able to gather round him.

After such an example what are we to think of those apostles for whom cinema shows, plays and athletics seem to form the programme of a fifth gospel for the conversion of the people !

When other means are lacking, the use of these things will no doubt have some result in attracting good Catholics and keeping others away from the occasions of sin, but for the most part such a result will be very limited or of short duration. God forbid that I should damp the zeal of our confrères who cannot imagine the use of any other method and who conjure up visions (as I did when I was a young priest without any experience) of their clubs being deserted, if they give less time to putting on these modern

amusements, which in their eyes are an essential condition of success. Let me just put them on their guard against the danger of attaching too much importance to these means and wish them the grace of understanding the reasoning of Canon Timon-David, whose experience we have already recorded.

One day, when I had been a priest for only two years, this venerable priest towards the end of a conversation felt obliged to say to me in a very friendly way, but not without a certain amount of pity : *" You cannot bear them now ; l* only later on, when you have made more progress in the interior life, will you understand better. At present, all things considered, you probably cannot do without these means ; use them without hesitation then for want of others. For my part I hold on to my young workmen and clerks, although we have nothing but those old but ever new amusements which cost us nothing, and yet give rest to the mind because they are so simple. Here ! " he added slyly, " In the loft I showed you the musical instruments that I too had considered absolutely necessary when I began ; but look, the band we have now will soon be coming in this direction, you can judge for yourself." And indeed a few minutes afterwards a group of boys from 12 to 15 went marching past us. What an uproar ! No one could help laughing at the sight of this fantastic battalion, which the old Canon watched with delighted eyes. " Look," he said, " at the fellow who is walking backwards, at the head of the squad, waving his stick like the conductor of an orchestra, and then suddenly putting it comically to his lips as if it was a clarinet ; he is a non-commissioned officer on leave, and one of our most influential workers. He makes a practice of daily communion, and above all he never misses his half hour of mental prayer. He is a wonderful practical joker but devout as an angel ; he knows how to use his talents to ensure that our amusements are never dull. Extraordinarily fertile in original ideas for games, he keeps this band of youngsters always happy.i.

i. Non potestis portare modo (Joan., XVI, 12).

But nothing escapes his adjutant's eye and his apostle's heart." It was impossible not to laugh at this group of musicians, who were executing all the best-known old airs. The tune was changed when the conductor gave the signal. Each performer imitated an instrument: some had their hands in front of their mouths like a horn, others were whistling with a leaf of paper between their lips, there were a few mouth organs, and so on. I forgot; in the first row was a trombone player and a big drummer; the first had two sticks one of which imitated the in-and-out movement, the second had an empty petrol can. The beaming faces of all these lads showed that they were really carried away by their game. "Let us follow the band," said the Canon. At the end of the garden path was a statue of the Blessed Virgin. "Kneel down, boys," shouted the band-master, "let us sing an *Ave Maris Stella* to our Holy Mother, then let us say a decade of the Rosary." The lads were silent for a moment and then answered to the Hail Marys as piously and slowly as if they were in the chapel. These young Southerners, most of them with downcast eyes, real imps a few minutes before, were changed suddenly into angels out of a painting by Fra Angelico. "Remember," said my guide, "that this is the thermometer of our work. Keep hold of your mature youths, even those over twenty, by simple enjoyable games; get them to aim at being little children here again when they come for prayer and recreation, so that they may amuse themselves with any little thing, but get them above all to pray, really to pray; this is the aim of all our zealous leaders." The band stood up and began fresh musical exploits, making the playground re-echo. A few minutes later they were uproariously busy at "prisoner's base." I noticed that the "non com." on getting up from his knees after the *Ave Maris Stella,* had whispered a few words to two or three lads; these at once gaily and, as if following a familiar practice, went to change overalls and shoes, and then were off to the chapel to pass a quarter of an hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

"Our ambition," added Canon Timon-David speaking with deep conviction, "must be to form zealous workers,

in whom the love of God will be so strong that after they have left the club and got married, they will remain apostles, eager to share the ardour of their charity with the greatest possible number of souls. If our apostolate," continued the holy priest, "aimed only at making good Christians, how narrow would be our ideal! What we have to do is to raise up legions of apostles, so that the fundamental social unit, the family, may become in its turn a centre of the apostolate. Now nothing but a life of sacrifice and union with Our Lord will enable us to learn the secret of realising this programme in full. On this condition alone will our activity make itself felt in society, and the word of the Master be fulfilled, *I am come to cast fire on the earth and what will I but that it be kindled?*[1]

It was not till long afterwards, alas, that I was able to understand the drift of the living lesson of the Canon, which was so profound in its psychology and its tactics, and to compare, under the eye of God for whom apparent success is nothing, the results of the different methods employed.

According as the methods are simple like the Gospel, or complicated as is all that is too human, we can judge a movement and those who inspire it.

Young David advanced against Goliath, with whom the best armed of the warriors of Israel had feared to fight; a sling, a stick, five stones from the torrent, were all the youth required. But his cry, *I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts,*[2] was already the mark of a soul *capable of reaching holiness.*

We hear much to-day about after-school training by secular groups. They may boast of having at their disposal enormous sums of money contributed by the State, magnificent buildings, and all that; the Church's after-school training groups, for all their poverty need fear nothing from their competition, provided they are built on the interior life; and by the charm of their ideal, which

1. Ignem veni mittere in terram et quid volo nisi ut accendatur? (Luc., XII, 49).

2, Venio ad te in nomine Dei exercituum (I Reg., XVII, 45).

is what attracts youth before everything else, they will win the pick of the rising generation.

One more example, to conclude. It will help us to analyse the man engaged in good works, who seems to be drawing souls to Our Lord and to be making apostles of them, but who in reality only arouses a certain amount of enthusiasm, which is the result of his own natural, personal appeal, and of the magnetic influence he exerts on all who come in contact with him. His followers, delighted to deal with a man of such charming piety, and proud at his taking an interest in them, form a sort of court around him, and vie with one another in accepting painful tasks and duties which seem to reflect true devotion ; but they do so chiefly in order to please him.

An excellent Congregation of teaching Sisters was under the spiritual direction of a religious whose life has just been written. " Reverend Mother," said this man of interior spirit to a local Superior one day, " I think it would be well if Sister X gave up teaching catechism for at least a year."—" Oh, Father, you don't really mean it, she is the best teacher we have ! Children come from every part of the town, drawn by her wonderful skill in teaching. To take her away from the catechism class will mean that all these little boys will desert us."—" I followed her class from the gallery," replied the Father, " she dazzles the children, indeed, but in too worldly a way. After another year in the novitiate, and better training in the interior life, she will sanctify both her own soul and the souls of the children by her zeal and the use of her talents. But at the present time, without being aware of it, she is standing in the way of the direct action of Our Lord on these children whom I am preparing for their First Communion. Come now, Mother, I see that my insistence gives you pain. Well, I will make a bargain with you. I know a certain Sister N, a very interior soul, but of no great talent. Ask your Superior General to send her here for awhile. The other nun can take the catechism for a quarter of an hour, just to calm your fears about desertion ; but little by little she will drop out of the picture. Then you will

see with how much more piety the children will say their prayers and sing the hymns. Their recollection and their docility will show a more supernatural character."

A fortnight later the Superior was able to verify this forecast. Sister N was teaching all alone and yet the number of children increased. It was as if Our Lord taught the catechism through her. Her looks, her modesty, her gentleness, her kindness, the way she made the sign of the cross, her tone of voice all *spoke* Our Lord. Sister X had been able to explain the driest subject with talent and make it interesting. Sister N did more than that. Of course she spared no pains to prepare her lessons and give them clearly; but her secret, and the thing which swayed the children in her class, was *unction*. It is by this unction that souls really enter into contact with Our Lord.

In the classes of Sister N there was much less noisy enthusiasm, fewer looks of astonishment, less of that kind of fascination which a very interesting lecture by an explorer or the moving account of a battle would produce.

On the other hand, there was an atmosphere of attention and recollection. These little boys behaved in the class room as if they were in church. No human methods had been employed to prevent inattention or boredom. What then was the mysterious influence that hovered above this group? It was without any doubt, Our Lord working directly. For a soul of interior life explaining the lessons of the catechism is like a harp which sounds under the fingers of the Divine Musician. No human skill, however wonderful it may be, can be compared to the action of Our Lord on the soul.

(f) Importance of the formation of chosen souls and of spiritual direction.

I wish to draw the reader's attention once more to the striking conversation already quoted,[1] which I had with Canon Timon-David. A word which fell from the lips of that experienced founder of good works has surely caught

1. Part II, ch. iii.

the reader's attention. By using the picturesque figure, " crutches," the venerable Canon summed up his views on the use of various modem amusements (plays, bands, films, costly and complicated games, etc.) to attract young men to their clubs and keep them there. Often the cause of overwork and low spirits, these attractions tend less to rest and expand the mind or to keep up physical health, than to flatter vanity or over-excite the imagination and the emotions. In fact, this word " crutches " in no way applies to those very refreshing though quite simple games which relax the mind, strengthen the body and have been found sufficient by so many generations of Christians.

On comparing the advice of the sensible Canon with that of other excellent directors of good works, we might well ask ourselves, if he did not exaggerate the cases in which the " crutches " can be done without.

Putting aside works founded especially for the relief of bodily ills, we may divide the others into two classes : those in which we want only carefully selected members, and those open to all except the " scabby sheep."

But we also assume that even in the latter case we try to form as well a nucleus of chosen members capable by their fervour of making others appreciate the real object of the club. We must also get all its members to lead a life not superficially but deeply Christian. Otherwise w'e have " an ordinary social club run by the Parish Priest," according to the sarcastic remark of an excellent teacher in a state of school, who detected in this sort of club as many disorders, behind the clerical front, as he deplored in establishments that were beyond the influence of the Church.

Directors who do not hesitate to reject from their clubs persons admittedly incapable of being admitted into the chosen group, find that the word "crutches" exactly expresses to what extent they consider as secondary those means which they can well do without or only tolerate with repugnance.

And they are certainly far from being without arguments to support their opinion.

For them the regeneration of Society, in France especially, can come only as a result of a more intense radiation of the holiness of the Church. It was by this means, they say, rather than by lectures on apologetics, that Christianity spread so rapidly in the first centuries of its history, in spite of the power of its enemies, of prejudices of all sorts and of the general corruption.

They put an end to all argument by replies of this kind : " Can you quote any fact, just one, to prove that during this period the Church had to invent amusements to turn aside from the vileness of pagan shows the souls she was going to win over ? "

A director of such good works as these, alluding to the thirst for money and the infatuation for the films which in our day makes most people crave for pleasure and enjoyment, said : " The Bread and Games, *Panem et Circenses,* of the Romans of the decline may be translated into modern terms as *the Dole and Films.*" Take for instance St. Ambrose or St. Augustine, those mighty guides of souls. Can we find in their lives an incident which shows them organising movements with the object of providing their flock with amusements that would make them forget the pleasures offered by paganism ? And w'hen St. Philip Neri set out to convert Rome so lukew'arm through the spirit of the Renaissance, do we read that he had need of the " crutches " which excited the wit of Canon Timon-David ?

It is certain that the primitive Church was able, as we have already hinted, to organise amongst the faithful a numerous and matcldess body of select members whose virtues struck the pagans with astonishment and excited the admiration of honest minds, even of those most prejudiced against the Christian religion by their principles, their traditions and their social customs. Conversions followed even in circles into which the priest could not enter.

In view of these lessons of the past, it is natural that we should ask ourselves whether nowadays we have not an excessive confidence, not only in certain noisy forms of amusements, but even in various other means (pilgrimages,

ostentatious festivals, congresses, speeches, publications, syndicates, political action, etc.) which are lavished upon us so abundantly nowadays, and which are very *useful,* no doubt, but which it would be lamentable to put in the first place. *Preaching by example* will always be the chief instrument of conversions. Only *exempla trahunt.* Lectures, good books, the Catholic press and even excellent sermons ought to revolve around this fundamental principle: We must organise the *apostolate for the people* by the example of fervent Christians who make Christ live again by sending forth the sweet odour of His virtues.

Can priests who let themselves be absorbed by all the other functions of their ministry, and do not devote themselves enough to the chief one, *the training of chosen souls for the great propaganda of good, example,*—can they be really surprised to find that in France three quarters of the men (and in other nations a great proportion) remain steeped in indifference, and see in the Church merely an honorable institution of a certain social utility, and not the matchless source of all individual strength, the keystone to the whole structure of families and nations and above all the great dispenser of truth and eternal life.

What then is this religion which is capable of so enlightening, strengthening and inflaming the heart of man? This was the cry uttered by the pagans in the presence of the marvellous effects produced by the *silent league of action by good example.* The strength of this league, which existed among the early Christians surely did not come from the sole practice of *Decline from evil.* Merely avoiding deeds condemned by the Decalogue would not have been enough to arouse both admiration and an overwhelming desire of imitation. It is especially to the second half of the Psalmist's admonition, *Do good,*[1] that the principles of *Exempla trahunt* applies. The practical display of the evangelical virtues was required, as put before the world by the Sermon on the Mount.

"If the Church," an eminent statesman, an agnostic,i.

1. Declina a malo et fac bonum (Psalm., XXXVI, 27).

once said to me, "was able to impress more deeply on the hearts of men the testament of her Founder, 'Love one another,' she would become a mighty power that the nations could not do without." Could not the same reflection be made with regard to the other virtues?

With his deep understanding of the needs of the Church, Saint Pius X often saw things with a rare clarity. Happening one day to be with a group of Cardinals, the Holy Father asked them: "What is the thing most necessary at the present time to save society?" "Build Catholic schools," said one. "No." "Multiply churches," replied another. "No, again." "Increase the numbers of the clergy," said a third. "No, no," replied the Pope. "What is most necessary at the present time, is to have in each parish *a group of laymen who will be at the same time virtuous, enlightened, determined and truly apostolic."* [1] Other details enable us to assert that this holy Pope at the end of his life counted for the salvation of the world on the training, by the zeal of the clergy, of Catholics devoting themselves to the apostolate by word and action, but *above all by example.* In the dioceses in which, before becoming Pope, he had exercised the ministry, he attached less importance to the census of parishioners than to the list of Catholics capable of radiating an apostolate. He considered that in any environment whatever chosen souls could be formed. And so he classified his priests according to the results which their *zeal* and their *abilities* had obtained on this point.i.

i. When we compare certain passages of the first Encyclical of Saint Pius X with various statements of his at a later period, we see that in the conversation, just quoted, it was the *fervour of priests* that he counted on for the training of the chosen ones that he mentions; and on these latter, the select laymen, he counts afterwards (more than on any other means) for the increase in numbers of the true faithful. Once this result is obtained, the recruiting of the clergy is assured, as well as the multiplication of schools and churches.

When quantity *does not spring from quality,* we run great risks of getting nothing but a display of noisy, empty, delusive pseudo-religion.

The opinion of this holy Pope gives immense weight to the views of those directors of good works who belong to the first category that we mentioned before. Those namely who believe that, *if the only real strategy for action on the masses consists in the training of picked workers, then it would be a mistake to keep members in the movement when there is no serious hope of their becoming fervent,* because through this lack of fervour the standard of the chosen body is likely to be lowered, even to such an extent that this picked group will come to be select only in name.

Other directors, who limit their action to getting rid of the absolutely hopeless members, have much to say against the expression "crutches" as a name for some of their methods which appear in their eyes most effective.

They urge the dangers to which souls would be exposed, if they were not protected by these parish societies; the necessity of being satisfied with a trivial number of recruits if select groups alone were aimed at; the poisoned atmosphere of the surroundings of those whom they must evangelise, etc. It would be unjust and cruel, they say, to neglect the masses and try to reach them only by the radiation of the picked body, without attempting to act directly on the mediocre souls, were it only to prevent them from sinking lower, and to get candidates from them for the picked body.

* * *

We have listened with great respect to the opinions of these directors of parish works, men and women, all of them people of perfect good faith and of undeniable zeal. We shall not try to reconcile their opposing views. But writing especially for our confrères in the priesthood, we prefer to ask ourselves what would have been the answer of the holy Abbé Allemand or of Canon Timon-David, if they were invited to bring these two doctrines into harmony with one another in a just mean.

Both had this plan:

1° To find out among the hundreds of young men

belonging to their organisation *even a small* minority capable of really desiring and seriously practising the interior life.

2° Then to enkindle their souls to a white heat by making them love Our Lord passionately, inspiring them with the ideal of the evangelical virtues, isolating them as much as possible from contact with other students, clerks, workmen, etc., until their interior life had reached the degree which rendered them really immune from all contagion.

3° Finally at the right moment to inspire these young men with zeal for souls, in order to use them more effectively to reach their comrades.

It would take us too long to say exactly what was the minimum that these two priests required from the less fervent, in order to allow them to remain in the organisation for some time. We prefer to draw attention to the *considerable importance they gave to spiritual direction* in carrying out their plan.

The Abbé Allemand took in handed *individual direction of each* youth and excelled in arousing in him a holy enthusiasm for perfection and in convincing him that the best proof of devotion to the Sacred Heart is the imitation of the virtues of our Divine Model.

As for Canon Timon-David, he was not only an excellent *confessor,* skilled in finding out and healing the wounds of the soul, but he was also a remarkable *spiritual director.* No one knew better than he how to enkindle the love of virtue in souls ; and he stirred up his colleagues in their guidance of souls to go higher than the purgative life, and *to steer* them to the illuminative life. Nothing surpassed his anxiety to make true directors of the priests who were helping in his work.

Both of these men considered as insufficient for their picked members the short exhortation before the weekly absolution, their sermons at the meetings, the training in the litrugical life, even their lectures, highly interesting as they were ; they considered *that personal direction once a month for each individual is* indispensable.

They were convinced that next to prayer and self-

sacrifice the most powerful means of gaining the grace of God for these chosen ones, who are destined to regenerate the world, is the activity of a real priest in all the branches of his ministry, but *especially by spiritual direction.*

Let us leave the limited area of organisations for the young to take a look over the whole field which the Church has to cultivate: works of all kinds, parishes, seminaries, communities and missions.

Nobody can be his own guide. Everyone has weaknesses to overcome, desires to check, duties to fulfil, dangers to escape, proximate occasions of sin to avoid, difficulties to conquer and doubts to clear up. If help is *needed* for all this, how *much more* for progress in perfection!

The priest would fail and fail seriously in his duty as teacher and healer of souls, if he deprived them of this great additional help to the confessional, this indispensable source of energy for the interior life which is called spiritual direction.

Poor is the work of those organisations and institutions whose confessors, *always in a hurry,* seldom give their penitents anything but a pious exhortation before absolution, the same for all, instead of providing a remedy which a painstaking and experienced doctor would know how to prescribe according to the state of each patient. In spite of his faith in the power of the sacrament, the penitent runs the risk of seeing in the priest only an "automatic dispenser," not unlike those slot machines at railway stations which hand out a sweetmeat mechanically.

Privileged on the contrary are those *chibs, schools, orphanages, etc.,* where the confessor knows the art of direction, and is convinced that he must above all put this art into practice, if he wants to make all those souls, attuned to a high ideal, give themselves wholeheartedly to the exercises of the interior life.

How many *fathers and mothers* have noticed that their influence on their children and their friends has greatly increased because they have found a true director!

What treasures there are in the *soul of a child* to work upon! It is the age when the tree is about to bend, often

once and for all, to one side or the other. Because they have not had from their earliest years direction suited to their age and disposition, many of them will grow up into adults, whom it will not be possible to count among the fairer flowers of the garden of Our Lord. Otherwise *what a number of priestly and religious vocations might have blossomed forth among them!*

Sometimes even for several generations *a parish or a mission,* will continue to show the influence of a priest who was something more than a mere giver of absolution. Besides Ars and Mesnil-Saint-Loup, we could mention other places which are real centres of the spiritual life in the midst of general lukewarmness, because they once had the happiness to possess a zealous, prudent and experienced director.

When I was travelling in Japan many years ago, I was astonished and deeply moved when I had the happiness of meeting the members of the many Christian families which were discovered about fifty years ago near Nagasaki. Such an amazing thing! Surrounded by pagans, obliged to hide their religion, deprived of priests for three centuries, these devoted Christians had received from their parents not only the faith but fervour. Where are we to find the initial impulse powerful enough to explain the strength and the duration of this extraordinary heritage? The answer is easy: their ancestors had in St. Francis Xavier a superb director of chosen souls.

How can some of our *diocesan seminaries* with no spiritual directors serve as nurseries for future priests? Through not having been guided early enough *towards perfection* most of their pupils later on will scarcely rise above mediocrity in the exercise of their ministry. Fortunate indeed will they be, those souls who are groping to find their way, if they have not been turned aside from their desire to become priests by their admiration for the natural talents of some of their teachers who manifest indifference for the inner life and contempt for consistent spiritual direction.

The proof of the fact that in a number of *religious com-*

munities, active as well as contemplative, many subjects merely vegetate, for the lack of spiritual direction, is to be found in the radical change that I have often observed in tepid religious, who have recovered the fervour of their profession as soon as they had found a conscientious director.

Some confessors seem to forget that the souls consecrated to God, who are in their charge, are *bound to strive for perfection* and have a real need of help and encouragement, in order to achieve this continual progress; to them may be applied the words of the psalm: *In his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps . . . they shall go from virtue to virhie:* [1] they would then become real apostles of the interior life.

How many priests too would be much more fervent, and find all their happiness in their eucharistie and liturgical life and in the progress of souls, if the confessor of their choice showed them a genuine friendship, and drew them tactfully by persuasion to monthly direction, and then to the higher perfection to which they are bound even more than religious.

Everyone has noticed the important part which writers of the lives of saints attribute to the spiritual director of those whose biographies they relate.

Would not the Church have *many more saints,* if generous souls, priests and religious especially, received more serious direction?

Were it not for the constant direction given by the priest to the parents of St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and, later on, the direct action of the representatives of God on this soul chosen by our Lord, would the earth now be receiving from heaven such an abundant shower of roses?

In his writings Father Desunnont often dwells upon the thought that *for certain souls* salvation is completely linked to sanctity; all or nothing; ardent love of Our Lord or worship of the world and the leadership of Satan; sanctity or damnation.i.

i. Ascensiones in corde suo disposuit . . . ibunt de virtute in virtutem (Ps. LXXXIII).

Would it be rash then for us to fear that painful surprises are in store for some priests at the Last Judgment who, through neglecting the study of the art of direction and not accepting the hard work demanded by its practice, are to a certain extent responsible for the mediocrity or even the loss of souls. They may have been good administrators, excellent preachers, full of solicitude for the sick and the poor, but they have nevertheless neglected the great means that Our Lord employed : *the transformation of society by means of chosen souls.* The little band of disciples whom Jesus chose and formed Himself, and who later on were filled by the Holy Ghost, were enough to begin the regeneration of the world.

Let us honour and respect those Bishops, ever becoming more and more numerous, who follow the counsel of Saint Pius X, and consider that in their seminaries a course of ascetic and even of mystical theology is far more useful than lectures on social science.

To emphasise the importance of direction they insist above all that their seminarians be faithful to it for the sake of their own personal progress, and that all the professors hold it in high esteem and *prove it by their radiation of the interior life.*

In addition they want all their candidates for the priesthood to learn everything that relates to the direction of souls, *regimen animarum,* an art which is based on well-established principles and wise counsels which have been practised by those who give them. It is especially of this *art of arts* that one may say that it is not enough to know merely *what* to do, but also *how* to do it.

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What a number of false notions and prejudices we must get rid of concerning direction, when we consult those authors whom the Church considers masters of the spiritual life.

Some penitents know too well how to lead direction away from its right path, once the priest allows his zeal

to wander off the course without a compass, and holds the rudder with too weak a grip !

How many wrong roads there are in which unlucky directors or penitents may go astray ! Time is spent in useless gossiping or in coddling the penitent's feelings or in flattering his self-love or in minimising by a quietistic view personal responsibility for sin ; thus are created schools of false piety and sentimentalism in which is developed a taste for emotion or mere external devotions ; we end up with a kind of solicitor's office, where the penitent gets accustomed to come for the smallest incidents of life, temporal affairs, family matters, etc.

Thus the priest must be on his guard that the character of the direction may not go astray. Everything ought to converge upon the exact object, which may be defined thus : *Spiritual direction consists in the methodical and continuous instruction, given by a person having grace of state, knowledge and experience (especially a priest'), to an upright and generous soul in order to help to advance it towards solid piety and even towards perfection.*

Direction is above all a training of the will, of that ruling faculty which St. Thomas calls the *vis unitiva,* and the only one after all, by which we will attain union with Our Saviour and the imitation of His virtues.

The director who is worthy of the name will examine and find out not only the inner causes of faults but also the different things which attract the soul. He will analyse its difficulties and dislikes in the spiritual combat. He will show it the beauty of an ideal, will try out, select, and control the ways of living that ideal, will point out the pitfalls and illusions, will shake off torpidity, will encourage, reprimand, and console, as required ; but only to strengthen the will against discouragement or despair.

Direction generally is inseparable from confession, as long as the soul, while still attached to sin, remains in the purgative state. When the soul has seriously begun to advance towards fervour, direction can more easily be given distinct from confession. To prevent their being confused some priests do not give direction till after

absolution and ordinarily allow it only once a month to those who go to confession every week.

It is not part of the programme of this volume to develop the method of giving direction. But as I am convinced that a number of priests should take more seriously this spiritual art, it gives me great pleasure, I admit, to attempt to offer to certain colleagues, who balle at the study of large volumes on the subject, a short and practical synopsis of the best that has been said on this subject.1 This *compendium* will not only render the direction and classification of souls more easy, but will also specify the recognised methods for direction adapted to the chief states of perfection.

Each soul is a world by itself; it has its own shades of difference. Still, as an ordinary rule, we may classify

1. Special treatises. *La direction spirituelle,* par le Vén. P. Libermann (Œuvre de St. Paul, 6, rue Cassette, Paris)—*L'esprit d'un directeur des âmes,* par M. Olier (Poussielgue, Paris)—*La charité sacerdotale,* par le P. Desunnont (Sainte Famille, rue Servandoni, Paris)—The various works of Fr. Timon-David.—*Les degrés de la vie spirituelle,* par Saudreau (Grassin et Richou, Angers) —*La pratique progressive de la Confession et de la Direction,* and other works of the same author on *Formation morale et religieuse* (Lib. St. Paul, Paris)—*Direction des enfants,* par Simon (Téqui, Paris)—*Pratique de l'education,* par Monfat (Téqui)—*L'educateur apôtre,* par Guibert (Gigord, Paris).

Among other authors who have spoken of spiritual direction are: Cassian, St. Gregory the Great, St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Teresa, St. Francis de Sales, St. XTncent de Paul, St. Alphonsus.—St. Jerome, St. Chantal, Bossuet, Fénelon, Dupanloup, etc., in their letters.—FF. Aquaviva, Lallemand, Grou, Scaramelli.—Ribet, *L'ascétisme chrétien* (Poussielgue, Paris). —Meynard, O. P. (Jules, Vic., Paris).—Mgr. Gay.—Saudreau *(L'Déal de l'âme fervente ; La voie qui mène à Dieu ; Manuel de spiritualité).*—Schryvers, C.SS.R., *Principes de la vie spirituelle* (Dewit, Brussels).

Works of education and of pedagogic psychology, such as those of FF. Eymieu (Perrin, Paris) and de la Vaissière, S. J. (Beauchesne, Paris), of FF. Raymond (Beauchesne, Paris) and Noble, O. P. (Lethielleux, Paris) will also prove most useful to directors.

In short, the serious study of *La Charité sacerdotale* of F. Desurmont or of the *Degrés de la Vie spirituelle* of Canon Saudreau will at once supply any priest with matter for giving direction.

Christians into a few groups. I think it useful to attempt such a classification, testing souls on the one hand by sin or imperfection, and on the other by their degree of prayer. May I be able by this list to induce some of my confrères to reflect on the necessity of studying these things in order to learn the practical rules for directing each soul according to its state!

In the first two categories the priest may not be able to work directly on the souls in question, but if he is a good director, he will be better able to guide parents or friends who are longing to win back those dear ones, even though they may be hardened in sin, before they are entirely rejected by God.

1. Hardened in Sin

Mortal sin.—Stubborn persistence in sin, either because of ignorance, or of a maliciously wrong conscience. Stifling of remorse, or absence of it.

Prayer.—Deliberate refusal to have any recourse to God.

2. Only Outwardly Christian

Mortal sin.—Considered as a trifling evil, easily forgiven; the soul easily gives way and commits mortal sin at every occasion or temptation. Confession almost without contrition.

Prayer.—Mechanical, without attention, or always dictated by temporal interest.—Rare and superficial examination of the state of one's soul.

3. Mediocre Piety

Mortal sin.—Weak resistance.—Hardly ever avoids occasions of sin; but has serious regrets for having sinned and makes good confessions.

Venial sin.—Complete acceptance of this sin, as being insignificant; hence lukewarmness of the will—nothing done to prevent venial sin, extirpate it, or find it out when concealed.

Prayer.—Fairly well said, but at long intervals. Occasional fits of fervour.

4. Intermittent Piety

Mortal sin.—Loyal resistance. Habitual avoidance of occasions of sin.—Deep regrets.—Does penance in reparation for sin.

Venial sin.—Sometimes deliberate.—Weak resistance.—Superficial regret.—Makes particular examination of conscience, but without any method.

Prayer.—Weak resolution of being faithful to meditation, which is given up in times of dryness or pressure of business.

5. Sustained Piety

Mortal sin.—Never.—At most very rare when taken suddenly and violently by surprise. Often even then mortal sin doubtful, followed by contrition and penance.

Venial sin.—Vigilant in avoiding and resisting it.—Rarely deliberate.—Keen sorrow, but little penance by way of reparation.—Methodical particular examen, but aiming only at avoidance of venial sins.

Imperfections.—The soul either avoids searching for them so as not to have to resist them, or easily excuses them.—Approves the idea of renouncing them, and would like to do so, but makes little effort.

Prayer.—Constant fidelity, in spite of everything, to affective mental prayer.—Alternation of spiritual consolation and dryness, the latter endured with difficulty.

6. Fervour

Venial sin.—Never deliberate.—Through surprise sometimes or with imperfect advertence.—Keenly regretted and fully atoned for.

Imperfections.—Completely renounced, guarded against and resisted heartily, in order to be more pleasing to God.—Sometimes however consented to but at once regretted.—Frequent acts of renunciation.—Particular examen practised with a view to perfection in a given virtue.

Prayer.—Mental prayer willingly prolonged. Often affective mental prayer, and even prayer of simplicity. Alternation of deep consolations and painful trials.

7. Relative Perfection

Imperfections.—Energetically avoided with great love. They happen through half-advertence.

Prayer.—Habitual life of prayer, even while occupied in external w'orks. Thirst for self-denial, humiliation, detachment and divine love.—Hunger for the Holy Eucharist and heaven.—Infused graces of mental prayer in different degrees. Often passive purifications.

8. Heroic Degree

Imperfections.—Nothing but the first involuntary impulse.

Prayer.—Supernatural gifts of contemplation, accompanied sometimes by extraordinary phenomena.—Marked passive purifications.—Contempt for self to the point of complete self-forgetfulness.—Suffering preferred to joy.

9. Complete Sanctity

Imperfections.—Scarcely apparent.

Prayer.—Usually, transforming union.—Spiritual marriage.—Purifications of love.—Ardent thirst for sufferings and humiliations.

Few and far between are the souls which reach the last three categories ; in them venial sin is more and more rare. We can understand therefore that priests wait till they come across such penitents, before studying what the best authors have to say, in order that their direction may be prudent and safe.

But there is no excuse for a confessor, who is too lacking in zeal to learn and apply the principles that relate to the four classes of *mediocre piety, intermittent piety, sustained piety and fervour,* and who allows souls to rust in their sad tepidity or to come to a standstill far below the degree of interior life to which God destined them.

As for the points to be touched upon in the direction of beginners in piety, they can, it seems, be reduced to the four following :

1° Peace.—Find out if the soul has true peace and not that which the world gives or which results from the absence of struggle. If it has none try to ground the soul in relative peace, in spite of its difficulties. This is the basis of all direction. *Calmness, recollection* and *confidence* come under this point.

2° A High Ideal.—As soon as you have gathered enough material to classify the soul and to know its weak points, its strength of character and temperament, its degree of striving for perfection, find out the proper means of enlivening its desire to live more seriously for Our Lord and to destroy the barriers which close the road to the development of grace. In a word, at this point, strive to urge the soul always to aim higher and higher, always *excelsior.*

3° Prayer.—Find out how the soul fulfils the duty of prayer, and analyse specially its degree of *fidelity to mental firayer,* the method of mental prayer which it follows, the obstacles it meets with and the profit which it gets from it, what value it gets from the Sacraments, the liturgical life, particular devotions, ejaculatory prayers and the practice of the presence of God.

4° Self-denial.—Find out on what point and especially how it makes the *particular examen* ; how it practises self-denial, whether through hatred for sin or through love for virtue ; how it keeps custody of the heart ; that is, what amount of vigilance in the spiritual combat is kept throughout the day.

All that is essential for direction can be reduced to these four points. All four can be examined each month, or each can be taken in turn, so as not to take too long.

Thus the zealous priest paralyses the germs of death in a soul and revives the seeds of life ; the practice of this supreme art becomes a passion with him ; the Holy Ghost, whose faithful minister he is, will not be sparing of those ineffable consolations, which constitute here below one

of the greatest joys of the priesthood ; He will pour them out upon him in proportion to his devotion in applying to souls the principles he has studied. Who more than St. Paul has experienced the joys of the apostolate ? Yet what a burning fire of zeal must have consumed him, when he could write : *For three years I ceased, not with tears to admonish every one of you night and day ! l*

Once I heard a bishop address the foliowhig words of admiration and gratitude to the doctor who after strenuous efforts had succeeded in pulling him through the crisis of a serious illness and had rapidly restored him to vigorous health : " My dear doctor, I know that your son is studying for the priesthood. If he and his confrères, when they have the care of souls, follow the example of your devotion and your professional conscientiousness in diagnosing sickness and prescribing the remedies and diet which are to restore the invalid to a flourishing state of health, then neither Jews nor Freemasons nor Protestants will be able to prevent the triumph of the faith amongst us."

The application of knowledge and the practice of devotion to duty will assuredly be blessed by God.

But what a *superhuman* power these two factors will acquire w'hen the priest who uses them is one of those to whom the priesthood is incomprehensible unless it means constant progress towards sanctity l

What a revolution of holiness WOuld sweep the world, if in every parish, in every mission, for every community, and at the head of every Catholic group there wras a genuine director of souls ! Then even in the institutions where mediocre subjects have to be kept (for instance, orphanages, asylums, homes) the basis of the whole programme would always be *to form a select group and separate them as much as possible from the middling ones, until such time as they can be trained to exercise a discreet but earnest apostolate among the others.*

Anyone who wrants to compare good wrorks in terms of the results which Our Lord expects from them will be obliged

i. Per triennium nocte et die non cessavi cum lacrimis monens unumquemque vestrum (Act. XX, 31).

to conclude that wherever there is a centre of true spiritual direction, there is no need of those wonderful "crutches" for marvellous results to abound; on the contrary the use of all the most fashionable "crutches" in the same enterprise and at the same time may cloak the lack of this direction, but never lessen its necessity.

The more zealous priests become in perfecting themselves in the art of direction and in devoting themselves to it the less necessary in their eyes will be the use of certain exterior means which are useful at the beginning to get into touch with the faithful, attract them, group them, interest them, hold them, and keep them under the influence of the Church. Faithful to its true end the Church will not be fully satisfied until these souls are *intimately incorporated* with Christ our Lord.

(g) The interior life through the Blessed Eucharist is the true cause of the success of the apostolate.

The aim of the Incarnation and in consequence of every apostolate is to raise humanity to the level of the divine. "Christ became man that man might become god."[1] "Wishing that we should be sharers in His Divinity, the only Son of God assumed our nature that having become man he might make men gods."[2] Now it is in the Blessed Eucharist or rather it is in the Eucharistic life, that is to say in a substantial interior life nourished at the divine banquet that the apostle assimilates the divine life. We have the word of the Master, authoritative, leaving no room for quibbling: *Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you shall not have life in you.*[3] The Eucharistic life is the life of Our Lord

1. Christus incarnatus est ut homo fieret deus (St. Augustine).
2. Unigenitus Dei Filius suae divinitatis volens nos esse participes naturam nostram assumpsit, ut homines deos faceret factus homo (St. Thomas, Off. Corpus Christi).
3. Nisi manducaveritis carnem Filii hominis et biberitis ejus sanguinem, non habebitis vitam in vobis (Joan., VI, 53).

in us not only by the indispensable state of grace but by the superabundance of His action. *I am come that they may have life and may have it more abundantly.*[1] If the apostle is to have a superabundance of divine life and to spread it among the faithful and if its only source is in the Blessed Eucharist, how then can we suppose that his works will be efficacious without the action of the Eucharist on those who, directly or indirectly, must be the dispensers of this life through these good works?

It is impossible to meditate on the consequences of the dogma of the Real Presence, of the Sacrifice of the Altar, and of Holy Communion, without being led to the conclusion that Our Lord has deigned to institute this Sacrament in order to make it the *centre of all activity, of all loyal devotion, of every apostolate* that can be really useful to the Church. If all the mystery of the Redemption centres on Calvary, all the graces of this mystery flow down upon us from the Altar, and the gospel worker who does not draw all his life from the Altar utters only a *word that is dead,* a word that caimot save souls, because it issues from a heart which is not sufficiently steeped in the Precious Blood.

It was not without a profound purpose that Our Lord, immediately after the Last Supper, spoke the parable of the vine and the branches in order to emphasise precisely how useless is any active ministry which is not animated by the interior life. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself . . . ,* so *neither can you, unless you abide in me.*[2] But He went on at once to point out how powerful will be the activity of an apostle who lives the interior life, the Eucharistic life. *He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit.*[3] *The same,* but he alone. God exercises His power only through such an apostle. "The reason is," says St. Athanasius, "that we are made as

1. Veni ut vitam habeant et abundantius habeant (Joan., X, 10).
2. Sicut palmes non potest ferre fructum a semetipso ... sic nec vos nisi in me manseritis (Joan., XV, 4).
3. Qui manet in me et ego in eo, hic fert fructum multum (Joan., XV, 5).

gods by the flesh of Christ." When the preacher and the catechist keep in their hearts the warm life of the Precious Blood, when their hearts are inflamed by the fire which consumes the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, what light and holy warmth is in their speech! and how the effects of the Blessed Eucharist radiate in a class, for instance, or in a hospital ward, in a parish organisation, etc., when those whom God has chosen to work there have nourished zeal in Holy Communion and have become *Christ-bearers!*

Whether the fight is against the demon whose wiles hold souls in ignorance, or against the spirit of pride and impurity which strives to make them drunk with pride or drown them in the mire of sin, the Blessed Eucharist which is the life of the true apostle, will have an influence far above all other against the enemy of salvation.

By the Blessed Eucharist love is made perfect. This living memorial of the Passion rekindles in the apostle the divine fire when it begins to die down. It makes Gethsemani, the Pretorium and Calvary live again in him; it teaches him the science of suffering and humiliation. The apostolic worker will then be able to speak to the afflicted in a language capable of making them share in the consolations which he has drawn from this sublime source.

He speaks the language of the virtues of which Our Lord remains the model, because every one of his words is, as it were, a drop of the Eucharistic Blood falling on souls. Without this reflection of the Eucharistic life the words of the active apostle will produce only a passing enthusiasm. Only the secondary faculties will be captivated and the outworks of the fort occupied; but the citadel, that is to say, the heart, the will, will as a rule remain impregnable.

The good results obtained by an apostolate correspond invariably to the degree of Eucharistic life acquired by the apostle. Indeed the sure sign of an efficacious apostolate is when it succeeds in making souls thirst for frequent and fruitful participation in the divine banquet. Such a result is obtained only in proportion to the measure in which the apostle himself lives truly with Jesus in the Host.

Like St. Thomas of Aquin who always drew near to the

Tabernacle when he wanted to discover the solution of a problem, the apostle too will confide all his difficulties to the divine Host and his action upon souls will be simply the putting into practice of his conversations with the Author of fife.

Our admirable Pontiff and Father of revered memory, Saint Pius X, the Pope of frequent Communion, was also the Pope of the interior life. *To re-establish all things in Christ* [1] was the first thing he had to say, above all to active apostles. It summarised the programme of an apostle who lived by the Blessed Eucharist, and saw that the Church would succeed only in proportion to the progress that souls make in the Eucharistic life.

The enterprises of our day, so numerous and still so often sterile, why have they not regenerated society? Let us once again admit it; they can be counted in far greater numbers than in past centuries and yet they have not been able to prevent the frightful ravages of impiety in the field of family life. Why? Because they are not sufficiently based on the interior *life,* on the Eucharistic *life,* on the liturgical *life.* The directors at the head of these enterprises have been brilliant in logic, in talent and even in a kind of piety; they have succeeded in spreading floods of light and introducing some practices of devotion; results certainly worthy of approval. But *because they have not drawn from the source of life to a sufficient degree,* they have not been able to pass on to others the fervour that influences the will. In vain have they striven to produce that hidden but powerful devotion to duty, that *active* ferment working through groups of people, those centres of supernatural attraction for which there is no substitute and which noiselessly but unceasingly spread the fire around them and penetrate slowly but surely into all classes of persons with whom they come into contact. Their life in Jesus was too weak to produce such results.

In former ages mere ordinary piety was enough to preserve souls from the contagion of evil. To counteracti.

1. Instaurare omnia in Christo (Eph., 1, 10).

the virulence of the pestilence of our times, a hundred times more deadly and so easily caught from the fatal allurements of the world, a much more active and vigorous serum is required. Through lack of laboratories capable of producing effective antitoxins our apostles have been satisfied with producing sentimental fervour, spasms of enthusiasm no sooner ablaze than extinguished, or else they have been able to reach only a small minority. Seminaries and novitiates have not turned out armies of priests, of religious men and women sufficiently inflamed by the Eucharistic wine. Therefore the fire that these chosen souls should have spread among pious lay people engaged in good works has remained latent. No doubt some worthy apostles have been given to the Church; but only very rarely has she been given workers who possess through their Eucharistic life that full piety, that custody of the heart, that ardent, active, generous and practical zeal, which is called the interior life.

We sometimes hear a parish spoken of as *good,* or even *excellent·,* because in it the people salute the pastor, speak to him with respect, show some liking for him, even going so far as to do him a favour, and yet in that parish the greater number go to work instead of to Mass, the Sacraments are abandoned, ignorance of religion, intemperance and blasphemy prevail, morals are at a low ebb. What a pity! Excellent parish? Can we call these people Christians, seeing that they lead such an utterly pagan life?

Apostles of the Gospel, we who deplore these sad results, why have we not gone more often to that school in which the Word of God trains His preachers? Why have we not learned the word of life more profoundly in heart-to-heart conversation with the God of the Eucharist? God has not spoken by our lips; that was our fatal weakness; let us no longer be astonished then if our human words have remained almost sterile.

We have not appeared to the faithful as a reflection of Our Lord and of His life in the Church. To get the people to believe in us, something of the sheen of Moses' halo when he came down to the Israelites from Mount Sinai

should have glowed about our brow. In the eyes of the Hebrews this halo bore witness to the intimacy of God's envoy with Him who sent him. The success of our mission demanded that we should be known not only as men of honour and conviction, but also as men glowing with a radiance from the Blessed Eucharist, which would reveal to the people some idea of the living God, whom nothing can resist. Orators, leaders, lecturers, catechists, professors, we have succeeded only imperfectly, because we have not reflected the divine intimacy.

We apostles who grieve over the failure of our ministry, we who know, when all is said, that man is as a rule moved ultimately only by the desire of happiness, let us ask ourselves if men have seen in us that *radiation of the eternal and infinite happiness of God,* which we should have won from our union with Him who, though hidden in the Tabernacle, is nevertheless the joy of the heavenly court.

The Master, for His part, never forgot this food of joy so necessary to His apostles. *These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled,*[1] He said, immediately after the Last Supper to remind us to what an extent the Blessed Eucharist was to be the source of all supreme happiness here below.

We ministers of the Lord for whom the Tabernacle has become mute and silent, the stone of consecration cold, the Host a venerated but lifeless memento, we have let our sheep wander in their evil paths. How could we ever have drawn them out of the mire of their forbidden pleasures? And yet we have spoken to them of the joys of religion and a good conscience. But because we had not slaked our thirst deeply enough at the living waters of the Lamb we have only been able to stammer in our attempts to describe those ineffable joys, the very desire of which would have broken the chains of the triple concupiscence much more effectively than our thundering words on hell. Through us the faithful have seen in God who is all love

1. Haec locutus sum vobis ut gaudium meum sit in vobis et gaudium vestrum impleatur (Joan., XV, 11).

only a stern lawgiver and a judge as inexorable in His decrees as He is rigorous in His chastisements. Our lips have not known how to speak the language of the Heart of Him who loves men, because our converse with Him has been as infrequent as it has been wanting in intimacy.

Let us not try' to cast the blame on the profoundly demoralised state of Society, since we have examples before our eyes of what can be done in parishes which had ceased to be Christian, by the presence of sensible, energetic, devoted, capable priests, but priests who were above all lovers of the Blessed Eucharist. In spite of all the efforts of the ministers of Satan these priests, a terror to the demon, *facti diabolo terribiles,* drawing their strength from the centre of all strength, the furnace of the Tabernacle, these priests, I say, alas, too rare, have wrought invincible weapons which the conspiring demons have been powerless to break.

Mental prayer before the Altar has not been for them fruitless and barren ; they have been able to understand these words of St. Francis of Assisi : " Prayer is the source of grace. Preaching is the channel which distributes the graces which we have received from Heaven. The ministers of the word of God have been chosen by the great King to bring to the nations of the earth what they themselves have learned and gathered, *especially before the Tabernacle."*

Our great motive for confidence is to see at work this present generation of devoted apostles, who are not satisfied any longer merely with getting people to go to Conununion for the sake of appearances, but are capable of forming souls who are real, true communicants.

PART FIVE

SOME PRINCIPLES AND COUNSELS FOR THE INTERIOR LIFE

1. Hints on the interior Life for Active Apostles.

To succeed in getting the reader to admit the striking *importance* of the doctrine, put forward in this book, would in itself be a good result, but an insufficient one.

The real purpose of the book is to get the reader to resolve: " I am going to live according to this doctrine."

So that it is now appropriate to say to the man busied in good works, to the apostle who has just read these pages, especially if he has read them on retreat : *Your approval of the subject-matter will remain almost useless, if it is not united to a firm resolution of intensifying your interior life."*

The aim of this fifth part then is to help those on retreat to strengthen those dispositions that are necessary in order that interior life may render good works more fruitful.

Convictions :

Zeal will get results only in so far as it is united to the action of Our Lord.

Our Lord does all the work ; we are only His instruments.

Our Lord does not give His blessing to enterprises in which men place their trust in human means alone.

Our Lord does not bless enterprises that are kept going solely by natural activity.

Our Lord does not bless enterprises in which self-love is working in the place of divine love.

Woe to the man who refuses to do the work to which God calls him !

Woe to the man who takes upon himself tasks without being assured that such is the will of God !

Woe to the man who in his work wants to manage things without truly depending on God !

Woe to the man who, in carrying out good works, does not take steps to preserve or regain interior life !

Woe to the man who does not know how to harmonise interior life and active life, so that the latter does not injure the former !

Principles:

ist Principle.—Not to plunge into good works through mere *natural energy,* but to consult God, so as to make sure that we act under the inspiration of grace, and with the morally certain guarantee that it is His will.

2nd Principle.—It is rash and dangerous to remain for too long a time engaged in excessive work, which would leave the soul in a *state incapable of performing the exercises essential to the interior life.* In such a case all, especially priests and religious should apply, even to the holiest works, the text, *Pluck it out and cast it from thee.*[1]

3rd Principle.—A *time-table* allotting to each activity a fixed time ought to be drawn up with the advice of a wise, holy and experienced priest and this should be strictly adhered to in order to control the flood of one's activities.

4th Principle.—For one's own profit and that of others the interior life must be cultivated above all. *The more one has to do,* the more one has need of this life. The more therefore should one thirst for it, and take measures that this thirst may not be one of those futile longings that Satan uses so cleverly to stupefy souls and keep them fast in their illusions.

5th Principle.—Supposing the soul finds itself by accident and really as a result of the Will of God under great stress of work, so that it is morally impossible to give sufficient time to prayer, what then ? The soul has an infallible thermometer which points out if it is r e a l l y keeping up its fervour ; so that if one has a real thirst for the inner

i. Erue eum et projice abs te (Matth., V, 29)—See the quotation from St. Bern., p. 57.

life and with earnest good wall seizes every opportunity of carrying out the *essential practices,* one may be at peace and count firmly on very special graces. God reserves them for this soul, and it will find in them sufficient strength to advance in the spiritual fife.

6th Principle.—As long as the active apostle has not reached the point where he is habitually recollected and dependent on grace, he is *not* in a satisfactory state of interior life. But in striving for this necessary recollection there must be no straining of the mind. A simple habitual *glance* coming rather from the heart than from the mind is enough, a *sure, accurate, penetrating* glance to see if we remain during the time of our work under the influence of Our Lord.

Practical hints :

i° Let this be impressed well upon your mind, that without the time-table mentioned above and the firm resolve to keep to it habitually, especially with regard to a fixed *hour for rising,* the soul *cannot* lead an interior life.

2° Base your interior life on its absolutely necessary foundation, *morning mental prayer.* St. Teresa says : He who is already fully resolved, cost what it may, to make a half hour's morning meditation has already gone half his journey." Without mental prayer the day will necessarily be one of tepidity.

30 *Mass, Holy Communion,* and recitation of the *Breviary,* which are *liturgical* functions, are inexhaustible mines of wealth for the interior fife and are to be *worked* with increasing faith and fervour.

40 The *particular* and *general examinations* of conscience ought to lead, like mental prayer and the liturgical life, to the habit of *custody of the heart,* in which we fulfil the obligation of watching and praying : *Vigilate et orate.*[1] The soul that attends to what is going on within itself and is sensitive to the *presence of the Most Holy Trinity,* acquires

I. Marc., XIV, 38,

the instinctive habit of turning to Our Lord in all circumstances, but especially if it sees a danger of dissipation or weakness.

5° Hence the need of unceasing prayer by means of *spiritual communions* and *ejaculatory prayers,* which are so easy for one who really wishes to practise them, even in the midst of the most absorbing occupations, and which can be so agreeably varied to meet the requirements of actual circumstances : dangers, difficulties, weariness, disappointments, etc.

6° Devout *study of Holy Scripture,* especially of the New Testament, must have a place in our priestly life every day or at least several times a week.—*Spiritual reading* in the evening is a daily duty that a generous soul will take care not to neglect. The mind needs to be brought face to face with supernatural truths, with the dogmas which generate piety and with the moral consequences which proceed from them, and which are so easily forgotten.

7° Thanks to this custody of the heart which will serve as a kind of remote preparation, *weekly confession* will *infallibly* be imbued with sincere contrition, true sorrow and a firm purpose of amendment ever more and more loyal and determined.

8° The *annual retreat* is very useful, but not sufficient. The *monthly retreat* (of a whole daj" or at least half a day) seriously employed in recovering the poise of one's soul is almost indispensable to the active apostle.

2. Mental prayer, a necessary element of the interior Life, and consequently of the apostolate.

A vague desire of the interior life, conceived after a rapid reading of some book would produce *no results.*

This desire must be *framed* in a *precise, fervent* and *practical* resolution.

A number of persons engaged in good works have asked me to help them to the means of realising a plan of interior life by laying down some general resolutions.

To accede to their requests means adding a sort of appendix to this book.

Nevertheless I willingly undertake to do so, being convinced that, on the one hand, the active worker, be he priest or layman, will not profit by what has gone before, if he is not fully determined to consecrate some time every morning to mental prayer ; and that, on the other hand, the priest who intends to make progress in the interior life cannot neglect to utilise the liturgical life and to practise custody of the heart.

I think it more practical to present these three points in the form of personal resolutions.

I do not in any way claim to originate a new method of mental prayer, but I shall try to extract the pith of the best methods.

Resolution on Mental Prayer

I resolve io be faithful to morning meditation.

I. Is this fidelity absolutely necessary ?

As a *priest* I heard at my ordination these grave words : *Sacerdos alter Christus.* I understood then that if I do not live in a special way with Jesus, I arn not a priest according to His Heart ; I have not the soul of a priest. As a *priest* I must live in intimacy with Jesus. He expects it from me : *" I will not now call you servants . . . but I have called you friends."* [1]

But *my life with Jesus,* Principle, Means and End, will develop in the measure in which He is the *Light* of my reason and of all my actions, interior and exterior, the *Love* ruling all the affections of my heart, my *Strength* in my trials, in my struggles, in my work, and the *Food* of that supernatural life which makes me share even in the life of God.

1. Jam non dicam vos servos ; vos autem dixi amicos (Joan., XV, 15).

Now this life wnth Our Lord, *guaranteed by my fidelity to mental prayer,* is morally *impossible* without this mental prayer.

Shall I dare to insult, by my refusal, the Heart of Him who offers me this *means of living* in friendship with Him ?

There is another important aspect, although it is negative, of the *necessity* for mental prayer. According to the economy of the divine plan it is *efficacious* against the dangers inherent in my weakness, in my relations with the world, in certain of my duties.

If I make my mental prayer, I am as it were clad in armour of steel and *invulnerable* to the arrows of the enemy. Without meditation these will *certainly* strike me. In consequence a number of faults, that I do not notice or scarcely notice, will be imputed to me as their cause.

"*Mental prayer or very great risk of damnation* is the choice that faces the priest in constant contact with the world," declares without hesitation the pious, learned and prudent Father Desurmont, one of the most experienced preachers of ecclesiastical retreats.

" For the apostle there is no halfway between holiness, if not acquired at least *desired* and *striven after* (especially by daily mental prayer), and gradual perversion," says Cardinal Lavigerie in his turn.

Each priest can apply to his mental prayer the words with which the Holy Ghost inspired the Psalmist : *Unless Thy law had been my meditation, I had then perhaps perished in my objection.*[1] Now this law' goes the length of obliging the priest to reproduce the spirit of Our Lord.

A priest is worth as much as his mental prayer is worth.

Two classes of Priests

i° Priests whose determination is such that they will not allow their mental prayer to be delayed by pretexts of social obligations, business, occupations, etc. Only the *very rare* case of absolute impossibility will make them

I. Nisi quod lex tua meditatio mea est, tunc forte periissem in humilitate mea (Psalm., CXVIÏI, 92).

put off till later their morning meditation. But nothing else.

These true priests are desirous of gaining definite *results* in their mental prayer; they keep it *distinct* from their thanksgiving after Mass, from any kind of spiritual reading, and naturally from the preparation of a sermon.

They are really holy because they *desire* to be; and as long as they persevere in this course their *salvation is morally certain.*

2° Priests who make only a half-hearted resolution and who *put off* their mental prayer and therefore easily omit it, *distort its object,* or make no real effort to succeed.

What is the result? Fatal tepidity, subtle illusions, a deadened or false conscience—*and these are so many steps towards the abyss of hell.*

To which of these two classes do I wish to belong? If I hesitate to make my choice, then *my retreat is a failure.*

All these things are finked together. If I give up my morning meditation, Holy Mass itself—and my communion—will give me no personal *profit* and may even be imputed to me as a *sin.* The laborious and mechanical recitation of *my Office* will no longer be the fervent, joyous expression of my liturgical life. No *vigilance,* no recollection, hence no ejaculatory prayers. Alas! no more *spiritual reading.* My apostolate will be less and less successful. No sincere *examination* of faults, never any particular examen. *Confessions made as a matter of routine and with often doubtful* contrition. The next step will be *sacrilege!*

The citadel less and less ably defended is delivered to the assault of a legion of enemies: *breaches* in the walls at first; soon *complete ruin.*

II. What my mental prayer ought to be

The ascending of the mind towards God.[1] "To ascend thus," says St. Thomas, "since it is an act, not of the speculative but of the practical reason, implies acts of the will." Consequently:

[1] Ascensio mentis ad Deum.

Mental prayer is *really hard work,* especially for beginners; Work to become *detached* from all that is not God.—Work to remain for half an hour *fixed on God.*—Work to make repeated fresh *starts* towards virtue.—This is work no doubt tiring at the beginning, but which I am determined to do generously,—work which, besides, will speedily be rewarded with the greatest consolation here below, peace in friendship and union with Jesus.

" Mental prayer," says St. Teresa, " is nothing but a conversation with a Friend, in which the soul speaks heart to heart with Him by whom the soul knows she is beloved."

Loving Conversation. It would be wicked to imagine that God, who makes me feel the need and often the attraction of this converse, and, what is more, makes it an obligation for me, should not want to make it easy for me. Even if I have given it up for some time, Our Lord calls me tenderly to mental prayer and offers me *special* assistance in *speaking this language of Faith, Hope and Love,* for that is, as Bossuet says, what my mental prayer ought to be.

Shall I resist the appeal of a Father who invites His prodigal son to come and listen to His word, to talk to Him as a son, to open his heart to Him and to listen to the beatings of His own ?

Simple Conversation. I will be myself. I will speak then to God as a sinner, and a prodigal son, or as one who is tepid or full of fervour. With the simplicity of a child, I will unfold the state of my soul before Him and speak only the language which shows me as I really am.

Practical Conversation. The blacksmith does not plunge the iron into the fire merely to make it hot and glowing, but to make it *softfor the hammer, malleable.* So too mental prayer enlightens my intelligence and enkindles my heart only to make my soul *pliant,* so that it can be moulded into a new shape, get rid of the defects and the form of the " old man " and acquire the form and virtues of Jesus Christ.

Thus my conversation wall result in elevating *my soul*

to the level of the holiness of Jesus, 1 so that He may be able to fashion it according to His own image. "Thou, 0 Lord Jesus, Thyself with Thy hand so gentle, so merciful, and yet so strong, Thou dost *form* and *mould* my heart." 2

III. How I should make my meditation

To be practical I will follow this *logical* order. I will put my mind and especially my faith and my heart in the presence of Our Lord, as if He Himself was *teaching me* a truth or a virtue. I will try to excite in my heart a great *desire* to put my soul in harmony with the ideal under consideration. I w'ill deplore what is opposed to it in myself. Foreseeing the various obstacles I will *decide* to overcome them. But being fully persuaded that by myself 1 shall not succeed, I wall obtain by my *earnest prayers* efficacious grace to succeed.

Worn out, breathless traveller that I am, I strive to slake my thirst . . . At last **Video** : 3 I see a spring, but it gushes out of a steep cliff . . . **Sitio** : the more **I** look at this limpid water which would enable me to continue my journey, the more my desire to quench my thirst increases in spite of all the obstacles . . . **Volo** : at any cost I wish to reach this spring and will make every effort to get there. Alas ! I have to admit my helplessness. **Volo Tecum** : a guide appears ; He only awaits my appeal in order to help me ; He even carries me over the difficult places. Soon I am quenching my thirst with long, deep draughts.

And that is the way the living waters of grace come, flowing from the Heart of Jesus.

My *spiritual reading* in the evening, so precious an element

1. Alvarez de Paz, on the object of mental prayer.
2. Tu Domine Jesu, Tu Ipse, manu mitissima, misericordissima, sed tamen fortissima, formans ac pertractans cor meum (St. Augustine).
3. Video, *I see* ; Sitio, *I thirst* ; Volo, *I wish* ; Volo Tecum, *I wish with Thee.*

of the interior life, rekindles my desire for *mental prayer next morning. Before going to bed* I foresee *briefly,* but in a *clear, energetic* fashion, the subject of my mental prayer, [1] as well as the special fruit that I want to derive from it, and in the presence of God I enkindle my desire to profit by it.

The time for mental frayer has come. I wish to draw myself away from the things of earth, to compel my imagination to present a living and speaking picture which [1] may put in place of my worries, distractions etc. ; [3] a quick sketch, in a few bold strokes, but it must be striking enough to *impress* me and *place me in the presence* of God, whose loving activity desires to surround and penetrate me. In this way I come into contact with a *living, adorable, amiable* companion. [4]

At once I fall into profound adoration of Him. This is my first duty. Then come self-humiliation, contrition,

1. A book of meditations is always necessary to prevent the mind from wandering. There is a number of books old and new, which offer everything demanded of books of meditation as distinct from spiritual reading. Each point contains some striking truth presented with clarity, force and brevity, so that when reflected upon it leads the soul on to a loving, practical conversation with God.

A single point is enough for half an hour ; it should be summed up in a text from the Bible, or from the liturgy, or in some fundamental idea suitable to my state. Before all, I must meditate on sin and the last things, at least once a month ; then on vocation, duties of my state, capital sins, chief virtues, attributes of God, mysteries of the Rosary or scenes from the Gospels, especially the Passion. The great feasts of the Liturgy suggest their own subjects.

2. The words *" having shut the door "* of Our Lord (Matt., VI, 6) urge me to choose for my meditation the place where I shall be the least disturbed—the church, my room, the garden, etc.

3. For instance Our Lord showing His sacred Heart and saying, *I am the resurrection and the life,*—or *Behold this Heart which has so loved men,*—or again, a scene of His life, Bethlehem, Thabor, Calvary, etc. If after a brief sincere effort you do not succeed in visualising the scene, go on with the meditation. God will make it up to you.

4. The success of the meditation often depends on the care that is devoted to considering the One to whom we speak as actually present and living, and ceasing to consider Him as distant or passive, that is to say, as a mere Abstraction.

submission, leading up to humble and trustful prayer that this conversation with my God may be blessed. 1

Video.

Discerning Thy *living presence,* O Jesus, and so detached from the purely natural order of things, I begin my conversation with You in the *language of Faith,* more productive than all the analysis of my reasoning powers. With this object I read or carefully turn over in my memory the point of my meditation. I sum it up and fix my attention on it.

0 Jesus, Thou it is who dost talk to me and teach me this truth. I wash to renew and to increase my Faith in this truth which Thou dost present to me as absolutely certain, since it is founded on Thy truth.

And do you, my soul, keep repeating: *I believe, I believe.* Repeat it with even greater conviction. Like a child repeating its lesson, repeat *very many times* that you cling to this doctrine and its consequences for eternity.2 Ô Jesus, this is true, absolutely true. I believe it. I wish this ray from the Sun of Revelation to act as the beacon of my day. Make my faith still more ardent. Fill me with an earnest desire of living according to this ideal and with a holy hatred for what is opposed to it. I wish to *devour* and assimilate this food of *truth.*

If however after spending a few minutes in exciting my faith, I still remain cold before the truth presented to me, I should not begin to strain. I should simply turn to Thee as Thy child, my good Master, and tell Thee how sorry I am for this weakness, and beg Thee to make up for it.

1. We must be *thoroughly convinced* of the fact that all God asks of us in this conversation is our good will. The soul which, although *beset by distractions,* returns every morning patiently and faithfully to its divine companion, makes an *excellent meditation.* God supplies everything that is lacking.

2. That is the way to make strong convictions take a firm hold on the soul, and to prepare for the gifts of the spirit of lively faith and supernatural insight.

Sitio.

The more frequent are my acts of Faith and, above all, the more powerful they are (for they are a true reflection of the light of the Divine Intelligence), the more intense will be the response of my heart; this is the *language of affective Love.*

Springing up in fact of themselves, or called forth by my will, come the *affections,* that my loving soul throws like flowers before Jesus who speaks to it: adoration, gratitude, love, joy, attachment to the divine Will, and detachment from everything else, from aversion, hatred, fear, anger, earthly hope, discouragement.

My heart selects *one or more* of these feelings, and is deeply impressed by their meaning; it tells them to Thee, O Jesus, and repeats them to Thee *many times,* tenderly, loyally, but simply.

If my *feelings* offer their help, I will accept it; it may be useful, but it is not necessary. Affection calm but deep, is safer and gives better results than superficial emotions; these latter do not depend on me and are never the measure of true efficacious mental prayer. But what is *always in my power* and really matters is the *effort* I make to shake off the numbness of my heart and to make it say, "My God I *wish* to unite myself to Thee, I *wish* to become as nothing before Thee. I *wish* to sing my gratitude and my joy in fulfilling Thy Will. I *do not wish* to be any longer untruthful when I say that I love Thee and detest what wounds Thee, etc."

Although my effort may have been sincere, still my heart may remain cold and express its affection with langour. I will lay before Thee then frankly, O Jesus, my disappointment and my desire. I will gladly prolong the expression of my regret, convinced that by lamenting this dryness before Thee, I am acquiring a special right to a most efficacious, though arid, cold, and dark union with the affections of Thy divine Heart.

How beautiful is the Ideal, O Jesus, that I behold in Thee! But is *my life* in *harmony* with this perfect Model?

That is what I now set out to discover under Thine earnest gaze, O my divine Companion, who art now all mercy, but wilt be all justice in the lonely interview of the Particular Judgment ; then with a single glance, Thou wilt examine the secret motive of the smallest acts of my life. Am I living according to this ideal ? If I were to die at this moment, O Jesus, wouldst Thou not find that my conduct is in *contradiction* with it ?

What faults, good Master, dost Thou wish me to correct ? Help me to discover the *obstacles* which prevent me from imitating Thee and then the inward or outward *causes* and the remote or proximate *occasions* of my failures.

When I see my failings and my difficulties my heart cries out to Thee, O my adored Redeemer, in confusion, sorrow, grief, bitter regret, ardent desire to do better, and it makes a generous and unreserved offering of my whole being. " I wish to please God in all things." [1]

Volo.

I pass on into the school of the *will.*

Now it is the *language of effective Love.* My affection has aroused in my heart the desire to correct myself. I have seen what stands in the way. Now it is the turn of my will to say: I *will* overcome them. O Jesus, my ardour in saying over and over again *I will* flows from my fervour in repeating *I believe, I love, I regret, I detest.*

If at times this **Volo** *does not rush forth with the energy that I would like, I will deplore, O my beloved Saviour, this weakness of my will and, far from being discouraged, I will never grow weary of repeating to Thee how much I desire to share Thy generous service of Thy Father.*

To *my general* resolution of working to save my soul and of loving God I will add that of *applying* my mental prayer to the difficulties, temptations, and dangers *of this day.*

1. *Volo placere Deo in omnibus.* Suarez sums up in these words the result of all his ascetical treatises. These acts of the *Sitio* dispose the soul to take the resolution of never refusing God anything.

But what I want most of all is to intensify, with stronger love, the *resolution* [1] of my particular examen (defect to overcome or virtue to practise). I will strengthen this resolution with motives drawn from the Heart of the Master. Like a true strategist I will be very clear as to the means that will ensure the success of my plan, anticipate the occasions and perpare for the battle.

If I anticipate some special occasion of dissipation, self-indulgence, humiliation, temptation, or some important decision, etc., I prepare for this moment with vigilance, and energy, but above all in union with Our Lord, and having recourse to Mary.

If I fall again in spite of these precautions, I shall remember the immense difference there is between these faults of surprise and my other lapses. Away with discouragement, since I know that God receives more glory from my repeated new beginnings by which I become more resolute, more distrustful of myself, more dependent on Him. Success is to be had only at this price.

Volo tecum.

"To ask a lame man to walk without a limp is less absurd than to try to succeed without Thee, O my Saviour" (St. Augustine). Why have my resolutions borne no fruit? Solely because *I can do all things* only *in Him who strengthened me.* [2] This brings me then to that part of my mental prayer which is in many ways the most important of all: *supplication or the language of hope.*

Without Thy grace, O Jesus, I can do nothing. To this grace I am in no way entitled. But I know that my entreaties, far from wearying Thee, will decide the measure

1. It is better to stick to the same resolution for months at a time or from one retreat to the next. The particular examen, in the form of a short conversation with Our Lord, completes the morning meditation and, by noting our progress or failure, helps our advance in an extraordinary fashion.

2. Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat (Phil., IV, 13).

of Thine aid to me, provided they reflect my thirst to belong to Thee, my distrust in myself, my unlimited, dare I say crazy, confidence in Thy Sacred Heart. Like the woman of Canaan, I cast myself at Thy feet, O infinite goodness! With her persistence, full of hope and humility, I beg of Thee not a few crumbs, but a full share in that banquet of which Thou hast said, *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me.*[1]

Having become by grace a member of Thy Mystical Body, I share in Thy life and in Thy merits and it is through Thee, O Jesus, that I pray. O Father of Holiness, I pray by the Precious Blood which cries out for mercy; canst Thou refuse to hear my prayer? It is the cry of a beggar that I raise to Thee, who art wealth inexhaustible: *Hear me for I am needy and poor.*[2] Clothe me with Thy strength and glorify Thy power in my weakness. Thy kindness, Thy promises and Thy merits, O Jesus, and my wretchedness and my confidence are the only titles on which I base my hope to obtain by my union with Thee vigilance and strength throughout this day.

Should difficulties arise, or any temptation, or some sacrifice to be exacted from one of my faculties, the text or the thought that I gathered as my *spiritual bouquet* will help me to breathe the fragrance of the prayer which surrounded my good resolutions, and once again at this moment, I shall utter the cry of powerful supplication. This *habit,* the result of my mental prayer, will also be the true test of its value: *By their fruits you shall know them.*[3]

* *

When I reach the point of living by faith *and in the* constant thirst for god, *then only may the work of the* Video *stage of mental prayer be omitted; the* Sitio *and the* Volo

1. Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan., IV, 34).
2. Exaudi me, quoniam inops et pauper sum ego (Psalm., LXXXV, I).
3. A fructibus eorum cognoscetis eos (Matt., VII, 16).

will spring from my heart ai the beginning of mental prayer, which will then be spent in eliciting affections and offering sacrifices, in strengthening my. resolute will, and then in begging from Jesus either directly or through Mary Immaculate, the Angels or the Saints, a more intimate and more-constant union with the divine Will.

The Holy Sacrifice now awaits me; mental prayer has prepared me for it. My participation in the Sacrifice of Calvary and my communion will be a kind of continuation of my meditation.[1] In my thanksgiving, I will extend my

1. Mental prayer is the furnace in which is rekindled the custody of the heart. By our fidelity to our mental prayer all the other exercises of piety will gain new life. The soul will gradually acquire vigilance and the spirit of prayer, that is, the habit of having recourse to God more and more frequently.

Union with God in mental prayer will lead to an intimate union with Him, even in the midst of our most absorbing occupations.

The soul living thus in union with Our Lord, by its vigilance will attract more and more the gifts of the Holy Ghost and the infused virtues, and perhaps God will call it to a higher degree of mental prayer.

That excellent volume, *The* IF*ays of Mental Prayer* by Dom Vital Lehodey (Lecoffre, Paris; Engl. Transi. M. H. Gill, Dublin), gives an exact account of what is required for the ascent of the soul by the different degrees of mental prayer, and gives rules for discerning whether a higher type of mental prayer is truly a gift of God or the result of illusion.

Before discussing affective mental prayer, the first degree of the advanced prayer to which God as a rule calls only those souls that have reached the state of vigilance by means of meditation, Fr. Rigoleuc, S.J., gives in his fine book *(Œuvres Spirituelles,* Avignon, 1843, Page 17 etc.), ten ways of conversing with God, when after a serious effort, one finds it a moral impossibility to meditate on a set subject prepared the night before.

Here I give a summary of the pious author's suggestions:

1ST Way. Take some spiritual book (New Testament or Imitation),—read a few lines pausing in between,—meditate a little on what has been read, try to get the full meaning and impress it on your mind.—Draw from it some holy affection, love, contrition, etc., resolve to practise this virtue when opportunity offers.

Avoid reading or meditating too much.—Stop at each pause as long as the mind finds agreeable and useful converse.

2ND Way. Take some text of Scripture or some vocal prayer, *Pater, Ave, Credo* for instance, repeat it, stopping after each word

demands to all the needs of the Church, to the souls under my care, to the dead, to my work, parents, friends, relations, benefactors, enemies, etc.

The recitation of the various hours of my Breviary, in union with the Church and for her and for myself, as well as frequent and fervent ejaculatory prayers, spiritual communions, particular examen, visit to the Blessed Sacrament, spiritual reading, rosary, general examination of conscience, etc., will all be as landmarks along my road ; they will revive my strength, and keep up the fervour

drawing from it various sentiments of piety on which you may dwell as long as you like.

At the end ask God for some grace or virtue, according to the subject of your meditation.

You are not to stop on any one word if it wearies or tires you ; when you find no matter for thought or affection, pass on quietly to another.—When you are touched by some good thought dwell on it as long as it lasts without troubling to go any further.—Nor is it necessary to make fresh acts always, it is sometimes enough to keep in God's presence, silently turning over in your mind the words already meditated or savouring the affections they have already produced in your heart.

3RD Way. When the subject you have prepared does not supply enough matter, make acts of faith, adoration, thanksgiving, hope, love, etc., making each as long as you wish, stopping a little at each one to delight in it.

4TH Way. When meditation is impossible and you are too helpless and dried-up to produce affections, tell Our Lord that you intend to make acts of contrition, for instance, as often as you take breath, or as you pass each bead of your rosary through your fingers or as you utter some short prayer. Renew from time to time this assurance of your intention ; and then if God gives you any other good sentiment, receive it with humility and dwell upon it.

5TH Way. In time of trial or dryness, if you are completely barren and powerless to make acts or to think, give yourself up to suffering generously, without troubling yourself or making any effort to avoid it, without making any other acts except to abandon yourself into the hands of God, to suffer this trial and any others that it may please Him to send. Or else you may unite your prayer to the Agony of Our Lord in the garden and His desolation on the Cross.—Persuade yourself that you are attached to the Cross with the Saviour and inspire yourself by His example to remain there, and to suffer unflinchingly until death.

6th Way. Examination of conscience.—Acknowledge your faults, passions, weaknesses, infirmities, helplessness, misery,

aroused in the morning, so that everything during my day may be under the influence of Our Lord. Thanks to this momentum, *recourse* to Jesus, more and more *frequent* at first, then *habitual,* either directly or by His Mother, will put an end to the contradiction between my admiration for His doctrine and my free-and-easy way of life, between my pious beliefs and my actual conduct.

I should like to add here, with the desire of being really useful to active workers, a special resolution with regard to the *Particular Examen.* I am afraid however of lengthening

nothingness.—Adore the judgments of God with regard to the state in which you find yourself.—Submit yourself to His holy Will.—Bless Him alike for the punishments of His justice and the favours of His mercy.—Humble yourself before His sovereign Majesty. Make a sincere avowal of your sins and infidelities and ask pardon. —Withdraw your false judgments and errors.—Detest all the evil that you have done and resolve to correct yourself in the future.

This kind of mental prayer is very free and untrammelled and admits of all sorts of affections; it may be practised at any time, especially after some unexpected trial, to submit to the punishments of God's justice or as a means of regaining recollection after the distraction of attending to active affairs.

7TH Way. Call up a vivid picture of the Last Things. Visualise yourself in agony, between time and eternity,—between your past life and God's judgment. What would you wish to have done? How would you wish to have lived? The pain that you will then feel.—Remember your sins, your negligence, your abuse of grace. How would you wish to have behaved on such and such an occasion? Resolve to remedy fully those defects which give you cause for anxiety.

Visualise yourself—dead, buried, rotting; forgotten by all,—see yourself before the tribunal of Christ,—in purgatory,—in hell.

The more vivid the picture, the more one profits by the meditation.

This mystic death is necessary to tear the flesh from the soul, and to raise it from the dead, that is, to free it from the corruption of sin. You must go through this purgatory in order to arrive at the enjoyment of God in this life.

8th Way. Apply your mind to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Salute Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament with all the respect that the Real Presence demands, unite yourself to Him and to all His divine operations in the Blessed Sacrament, where He ceases not to adore, praise and love His Father in the name of all men and in the condition of a victim.

Picture His recollection, hidden life, utter privation of everything,

this treatise beyond measure. And yet from reading Cassian, several Fathers of the Church, as well as St. Ignatius, St. Francis de Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, we see that the Particular Examen and the General Examination are *necessary* adjuncts of mental prayer and are closely linked with custody of the heart.

Following the guidance of the spiritual director the soul is now resolved both in meditation and throughout the day to make *a more direct aim* at some *special defect* or some *special virtue,* which is the *chief* source of other defects or virtues.

Great is the number of the steeds that draw the chariot ;

obedience, humility, etc.,—excite yourself to imitate these virtues and resolve to do so when an occasion presents itself. Offer Jesus Christ to the Father as the only victim worthy of Him, and by whom you can pay homage to Him, acknowledge His benefits, satisfy His justice and oblige His mercy to help you.

Offer yourself in sacrifice to Him, your being, your life, your occupations. Offer up to Him some act of virtue which you resolve to perform, some mortification that you are determined to do, in order that you may overcome yourself, and offer this for the same end for which Our Lord immolates Himself in the Blessed Sacrament. Make this offering with an ardent desire of increasing, as far as you can, the glory which He renders to His Father in this august Sacrament, End by making a spiritual communion.

This is an excellent form of mental prayer—especially for your visit to the Blessed Sacrament. You should familiarise yourself with it, for your happiness in this life depends on your union with Our Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament.

9TH Way. This prayer is to be made in the name of Jesus Christ. —It excites your confidence in God and makes you enter into the feelings and the spirit of Our Lord.

It is based on the fact that you are united to the Son of God, and are His brother, a member of His Mystical Body, that He has made over to you all His merits, left to you the legacy of all the reward that His Father owes Him for His labours and His death. This is what makes you capable of honouring God with a worship worthy of Him, and gives you the right to treat with God and in some sort exact His graces as though by justice.—You have not this right as a creature, still less as a sinner, for there is an infinite disproportion between God and the creature and an infinite opposition between God and the sinner. But because you are united to the Incarnate Word, because you are His brother and one of His members, you can appear before God with confidence, treat familiarly

the eye of the driver watches them all constantly. But in the centre of the team there is one that demands the special attention of the driver ; should this steed veer too much to the right or too much to the left, all the others are thrown out of their stride.

The analysis of the soul by the Particular Examen, to settle whether there has been progress, back-sliding, or stagnation with regard to *a carefully chosen point,* is only one element in the custody of the heart.

with Him, oblige Him to listen to you favourably, to hear your prayers, grant you His graces, again because of the alliance and union that you have with His Son.

You must appear then before God, either to adore Him, or to love Him, or to praise Him by Jesus Christ working with you as the Head in His members and raising you by His spirit to a divine state,—or else to ask for some favour in virtue of the merits of His Son.—You must put before Him the services that this well-beloved Son has rendered to Him, His life, His death, His sufferings, the sole recompense of which belongs to you on account of the transfer He has made of them to you. And this is the spirit in which you should recite the Divine Office.

Ioin Way. Simple attention to the presence of God, and meditation.

Before applying yourself to the meditation of the prepared subject you must put yourself in the presence of God, without making any other distinct thought, or exciting any other feeling than that of respect and love for God, which His presence inspires.—Be content with keeping yourself thus before God in silence in this simple repose of the spirit as long as it satisfies you.—Then go on with your meditation in the ordinary way.

It is good to begin all meditations in this way and to return to it after each point and to rest in this simple awareness of God's presence. You train yourself thus in interior recollection.—You will grow accustomed to fix your mind on God and thus prepare yourself gradually for contemplation.—But you must not remain this way through sheer idleness or in order to avoid the trouble of meditating.

3. The liturgical Life is a Source of the interior Life, hence of the Apostolate.

Resolution on the Liturgical Life

By the use I make of my Mass, my Breviary and my other liturgical functions, I wish both as member *and* ambassador *of the Church, to unite myself more and more to her life and thus more fully to put on Christ and Christ Crucified, especially if I am His* minister.

I. What is the Liturgy?

O Jesus, Thee do I adore as the Centre of the Liturgy. Thou dost give unity to this Liturgy. I may define it as *the public, social, official worship,* which the Church renders to God ; or again, *the sum total of the public means, which the Church uses chiefly in the Missal, Ritual and Breviary, to express her religion to the Adorable Trinity, as well as to instruct and sanctify souls.*

It is in the very bosom of the Adorable Trinity that I should contemplate the *Eternal Liturgy,* by which the Three Persons chant one to the other their divine Life and infinite Holiness in their ineffable hymn of the generation of the Word and the procession of the Holy Ghost. .4s *it was in the beginning . . . Sicut erat in principio.*

God desired to be praised outside of Himself ; He created the angels and heaven re-echoed with their acclamations : *Holy, Holy, Holy . . . Sanctus, Sanctus Sanctus.* He created the visible world and it proclaimed aloud His power : *The heavens announce the glory of God.*

Adam appears and begins in the name of creation the hymn of praise, an echo of the Eternal Liturgy. Abel Noah, Melchisedech, Abraham, Moses, the people of God, David and all the saints of the Old Law vied with one another in chanting this hymn. The Jewish Passover, the sacrifices and holocausts, the solemn worship offered to Jehovah in

His temple gave it an official form. Yet it was an imperfect hymn, especially after the Fall. *Praise is not seemly in the mouth of a sinner*[1]

Thou, O Jesus, Thou alone art the perfect hymn of praise, since Thou art the true glory of the Father; no one can glorify the Father worthily but through Thee. *By Him, with Him, and in Him, all honour and glory are given to Thee, O God the Father.*[2] Thou art the *link* between the Liturgy of earth and the Liturgy of heaven, in which Thou dost give to Thine elect a more direct participation. Thine Incarnation has come to unite in a *living, substantial* union mankind and all creation with the Liturgy of God Himself. *It is God who gives praise to God,* praise full and perfect which rises to its highest pitch in the Sacrifice of Calvary.

Before leaving the earth, divine Saviour, Thou didst institute the *Sacrifice* of the New Law in order to renew Thine immolation. Thou didst also institute the *Sacraments* in order to communicate Thy life to souls.

But Thou hast left to Thy Church the care of *surrounding* this sacrifice and these Sacraments with symbols, ceremonies, exhortations, prayers, etc., in order that she might thus pay greater honour to the mystery of the Redemption, and make it easier for her children to understand it, and help them to profit more from it, while exciting in their souls for this mystery a respect mingled with awe.

To Thy Church Thou hast also given the mission of *continuing* till the end of time the prayer and praise which Thy Heart never ceased to send up to Thy Father during Thy mortal life, and which it still offers unceasingly to Him in the Tabernacle and in the splendour of Thy glory in Heaven.

With the love of a Spouse which she has for Thee, with a mother's solicitude for us which comes to her from Thy Sacred Heart, the Church has performed this twofold

1. Non est speciosa laus in ore peccatoris (Eccli., XV, 9).
2. Per Ipsum, et cum Ipso et in Ipso est tibi Deo Patri . . . omnis honor et gloria (Canon of the Mass).

task. Thus have been formed those wonderful collections which include all the treasures of the Liturgy.

Ever since, the Church has been uniting her praises to those which the Angels and the elect, her children, render to God in heaven. *In this way she anticipates her occupation for all eternity.*

By being united to the praises of the God-Man this praise, the prayer of the Church, *becomes divine* and the Liturgy of earth mingles with that of the heavenly choirs in the Heart of Jesus, echoing that eternal praise which flows from the centre of infinite love, which is the Most Holy Trinity.

II. What is the Liturgical Life ?

Thy Church, O Lord, is not satisfied with the faithful observance of the rubrics and the correct pronunciation of the words.

There is no doubt that *Thou dost desire that my good will should give Thee more than this.* Thou wishest my mind and my heart to profit by the riches hidden in the Liturgy and thus to be more united to Thy Church and thereby achieve a closer union with Thee.

Led by the example of Thy most faithful servants, I eagerly wish, O good Master, to take my place at that rich banquet to which Thy Church invites me, in the sure knowledge that I shall find in the Divine Office, in the forms, ceremonies, collects, epistles, gospels, etc., which accompany the august Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments, *a food as healthy as it is abundant for the development of my interior life.*

Some reflection on the leading idea which unites all the elements of the Liturgy together, and on the results by which my progress can be judged, will preserve me from self-delusion.

* * *

Each of the sacred rites may be compared to a precious stone. But the value and the brilliancy of those which belong to the Mass and the Office are increased to the highest

pitch, when I know how' to enshrine them all in that wonderful setting which forms the *Liturgical Cycle.*1

Living throughout a long period under the influence of a mystery, nourished by what is most instructive and most touching in Scripture and Tradition on this subject, and constantly directed towards the *same order of ideas,* my soul must necessarily feel the influence of so much concentration and find in the thoughts that the Church suggests a food as substantial as it is delightful, and which will dispose it to receive that *special grace* which God reserves for each period, for each feast in this Cycle.

The mystery takes hold of me, not only as an abstract truth that one assimilates by meditation, but *it grips my whole being* by bringing into play even my sensitive faculties to excite my heart and determine my will. No longer is it a simple memorial of some past event, or a simple anniversary ; it is a living fact, which has the stamp of *a present event to which the Church gives an application here and now,* and in which she really takes part.

At Christmas time, for instance, -while rejoicing before the altar at the coming of the Divine Child, my soul can repeat, *To-day Christ is born, to-day the Saviour has appeared, to-day the Angels sing on earth.*1.

At each period in the Liturgical Cycle the Missal and the Breviary disclose to me new rays of the divine love of Him, who for us has become at the same time our King, Teacher,

i. The Church inspired by God and taught by the holy apostles has so arranged the year, that we find in it together with the life, the mysteries, the preaching and doctrine of Jesus Christ, the true fruit of all these things in the admirable virtues of His servants and in the examples of His saints, and finally, a marvellous compendium of the Old and New Testaments and of all Church History. In this way all the seasons are full of fruit for Christians ; all are full of Jesus Christ. In this variety, which all leads up to that unity so much recommended by Our Lord, the innocent and pious soul finds, together with heavenly pleasures, a solid nourishment and a perpetual renewal of her fervour. (Bocssuet, *Orais. fun. de Marie-Thérèse d'Autriche).*

1. Hodie Christus natus est, hodie Salvator apparuit, hodie in erra canunt Angeli (Office of Christmas).

Healer, Consoler, Saviour and Friend. At the altar, just as at Bethlehem or at Nazareth or on the shores of the Lake of Tiberias, Jesus reveals Himself as Light, Love, Tenderness, Mercy. He reveals Himself, above all, as *Love personified,* because He is *Stiffering personified,* in agony at Gethsemani, atoning on Calvary.

And so the Liturgy gives to the *Eucharistic Life* its full development. And Thine Incarnation, which has brought God near to us, O Jesus, by showing Him visible in Thee, continues to render us the same service at each of the mysteries that we celebrate.

In this way, O Jesus, I share, thanks to the Liturgy, *in the life of the Church and in Thine own.* With her I assist each year at all the mysteries of Thy Life, the hidden, the public, the suffering, the glorious; with her I study its lessons. Besides, the periodic feasts of Our Lady and the Saints, who have most closely imitated Thine interior Life by putting their examples before my eyes, bring me an ever-increasing light and strength to reproduce in myself Thy virtues and to impress on the souls of the faithful the spirit of Thy Gospel.

How can I carry out in my apostolate the desire of Saint Pius X? How will the faithful be able, through my co-operation, to *have an active share in the Holy Mysteries and in the public solemn Prayer of the Church* (which, says this Pope, are the *first and indispensable source of the true Christian spirit),* if I myself pass by the treasures of the Liturgy without even suspecting the wonders to be found therein?

In order to bring more unity into my spiritual life and to unite myself still more to the life of the Church, I will aim at uniting my other exercises of piety as far as possible with the Liturgy. For instance, I will choose by preference a *subject for meditation* which has a connection with the Liturgical period or feast or cycle; in my *visits to the Blessed Sacrament* I will converse more readily according to the season of the year with the Child Jesus, with Jesus suffering, with Jesus glorified, with Jesus living in His Church, etc. *Private Reading* on the Mystery or the life

of the Saint whose memory is being honoured will also bring help to this plan of liturgical spirituality.

* * *

Adorable Master, preserve me from *counterfeits of the Liturgical Life*. They are hurtful to all interior life, especially because they weaken the spiritual combat.

Preserve me from a piety which would make this Liturgical Life consist only in poetic enjoyment or in an alluring study of religious archaeology; or else would lead to *quietism* and all its consequences; for quietism strikes at the very roots of the interior Life: fear, hope, desire of salvation and of perfection, fighting one's defects and working to acquire virtue.

Make me really convinced that in this age of absorbing and perilous occupations, the Liturgical Life, however perfect it may be, *can never dispense with morning mental prayer*.

Keep far from me all *sentimentality* and *false piety*, which would make the Liturgical Life consist in impressions and emotions, leaving the will to become the slave of the imagination and the feelings.

Not that I am to remain untouched by all the beauty and poetry which the Liturgy contains; quite the contrary. By her chant and her ceremonies the Church appeals intimately to the feelings, with the object of more fully reaching the minds of her children, of presenting *to their wills* more effectively what is really *good*, and of raising them up more surely, more easily and more completely towards God.

I can therefore enjoy all the unchanging and wholesome refreshment of the Dogmas enhanced by the Liturgy, allow myself to be moved by the majestic spectacle of a solemn High Mass, and esteem the prayers of the absolution or the touching rites of baptism, extreme unction, the burial service, etc.

But I must never lose sight of the fact that all the

resources offered by the holy Liturgy are only means to reach the *sole end* of all interior life: *to put to death the "old man," so that Thou, O Jesus, may live and reign in his place.*

I will therefore be living the true Liturgical Life only when I am so *filled with the liturgical spirit that I make use of my Mass, Prayers and official Rites to intensify my union with the Church, and thus to advance in my participation in the interior life of Our Lord, and by that means in His virtues, so that I may give a inter reflection of them to the faithful.*

III. The Liturgical Spirit

This Liturgical Life, O Jesus, supposes a special attraction for everything that pertains to worship.

To some Thou hast freely given this attraction; others are less privileged. But if they ask it from Thee and make use of study and reflection they too will obtain it.

The meditation that I shall make later on concerning the advantages of the Liturgical Life will increase my desire of acquiring it at any cost. At present I pause to consider the special characteristics which distinguish this life, and give it such an important place in spirituality.

♦

To be united even remotely to Thy Sacrifice, O Jesus, by thought and intention along with the Church, to mingle my prayer with the official and unceasing prayer of Thy Church, this is already a great thing! The heart of the ordinary' Christian thus wings its way more surely to God, borne up to Him by Thy praise, adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and petition.1

I. Union with the prayers of others may lead to advanced holiness. Take the case of the peasant who offered to carry the luggage of St. Ignatius and his companions. Noticing that the Fathers on arriving at a tavern made haste to find a quiet corner to recollect themselves before God, he followed their example and knelt down

In the words of Saint Pius X, " To take an *active part in the Holy Mysteries, and in the public and solemn Prayer* " by assisting with piety and understanding, by being eager to profit by festival days and ceremonies, or better still by serving Mass, and answering the prayers, or by helping in the recitation or the singing of the Office—this is the means of entering *more directly* into union with the thoughts of the Church and of drawing from its *original and indispensable source the true Christian spirits*

But, O Holy Church, what a noble mission it is to present oneslf every day by virtue of ordination or religious profession in union with the Angels and the Elect as your recognised ambassador before the throne of God to offer your official Prayer !

What a dignity, incomparably more sublime and above all expression is mine when as an ordained Minister, I become *another Christ,* 0 My divine Redeemer, by administering the Sacraments and above all by celebrating the Holy Sacrifice !

* *

1st Principle.—*As a member of the Church I must be*

like them. One day they asked him what he did when he knelt down on these occasions. " I do not do anything else," he replied " but say, ' Lord, these men are saints and I am their beast of burden ; what they do I want to do too, and this is what I offer to God.' " (Rodriguez, cf. Christ. Peri. ; part. I, 5th treatise, ch. XIX).,

If this man by means of the continual practice of this exercise reached a high degree of mental prayer and spirituality, how much more would even an uneducated rnan profit greatly by uniting with the I.iturgical Life of the Church !

A Cistercian lay brother of Clairvaux was minding the sheep out in the hills during the night of the Assumption. He did his best, especially by repeating the Hail Mary, to unite himself to the Matins which the monks were chanting, and the distant echoes of which came faintly to his ears. God revealed to St. Bernard that this simple, humble prayer had pleased Our Lady so much, that she had preferred it to that of the other monks, fervent as they were (Exordium magnum Ord. Cister., Distinct, *4, c.* XIII).

i. Motu proprio of St. Pius X, 22 Nov. 1903

convinced that when I take part, even as an ordinary Christian in a liturgical ceremony, I am united to the whole Church, not only by the Communion of Saints, but in virtue of a real and active co-operation in an act of religion which the Church, the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, offers as a Society to God. By this union the Church like a true Mother helps to train my soul in the Christian virtues.[1]

Thy Church, O Jesus, forms a perfect Society, the members of which, closely united to one another, are destined to form a still more perfect and holy Society, that of the Elect.

As a Christian I am a member of that Body of which Thou art the *Head* and the *Life*. *And that is how Thou dost regard me,* divine Saviour ; and I cause Thee special joy when in presenting myself before Thee, I look upon Thee as my Head and look upon myself as one of the sheep of this Fold, of which Thou art the sole Shepherd, and which encloses in its unity all my brothers of the Church militant, triumphant and suffering.

Thine apostle teaches me this doctrine, which expands my soul and widens the horizon of my spirituality: *For as in one body we have many members, so we being many*

1. The priest and even the bishop, is held to be only one of the faithful when, discharging no special function, he assists at a ceremony ; and he is able to profit from it as a ordinary Christian.

2. We can better understand the efficacy of the Liturgy to help us to live by grace and make interior life easier for us, when we recall that every official prayer, every ceremony instituted by the Church, possesses a power of impétration which is most efficacious in itself, *per se efficacissima.* In this case the power that is put in action is not only the gesture of an individual, the isolated prayer of a soul however excellently disposed, but also the act of the Church, which becomes a suppliant along with us ; it is the voice of the well-beloved Spouse, which always delights the heart of God, and which He always hears and answers in *some way.*

If I had to sum up this briefly, I should say that the power of impétration of the liturgical prayer is made up of two elements : the *opus operantis* of the soul which uses the great Sacramental of the Liturgy, and the *opus operantis* of the Church. The two actions, that of the soul and that of the Church, are like two forces which combine and are carried up in a single momentum to God.

are one body in Christ, and each one member one of another.[1] For *as the body is one,* he says elsewhere, *and hath many members; and all the members of the body, whereas they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ.*[2]

This then is the unity of Thy Church: indivisible in its whole and in its parts, entire in its whole and entire in each of its parts,[3] united in the Holy Ghost, united to Thee, O Jesus, and brought by this union into the unique and eternal Society of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost?

The Church is the assembly of the faithful who under the government of the *same* authority are united by the *same* faith and by the *same* charity and tend to the *same* end, that is *incorporation in Christ,* by the *same* means, which are summed up in *grace,* of which the ordinary channels are *prayer* and the *Sacraments.*

The great prayer, and the favourite channel of grace, is the *prayer of the Liturgy,* the prayer of the Church itself, *more powerful* than the prayer of single individuals and even of pious associations, no matter how powerful private and non-liturgical forms of common prayer may be, and no matter how much they may be recommended in the Gospel.[5]

Incorporated in the true Church, a child of God and a member of Christ by the Sacrament of Baptism, I have acquired *the right* of partaking in the other Sacraments, in the Divine Office, in the fruits of the Mass, and in

1. Sicut enim in uno corpore multa membra habemus . . . ita multi unum corpus sumus in Christo, singuli autem alter alterius membra (Rom., XII, 4, 5).

2. Sicut enim corpus unum est et membra habet multa, omnia autem membra corporis cum sint multa unum tamen corpus sunt, ita et Christus (I Cor., XII, 12).

3. Unusquisque fidelium quasi quaedam minor videtur esse Ecclesia, dum salvo unitatis arcanae mysterio, cuncta Redemptionis humanae unus homo suscipit Sacramenta (S. Pet. Dam. Opusc. XI, ch. x—Patr. Lat., t. CXLV, coi. 239).

4. S. Pet. Dam, quoted by D. Gréa, *La Sainte Liturgie,* p. 51.

5. S. Ign. Epist. to Eph. n. 5. St. Alphonsus Liguori preferred one prayer of the Breviary to a hundred private prayers.

indulgences and the prayers of the Church. I can benefit by all the graces and all the merits of my brethren.

By Baptism I am signed with an indelible mark which *commissions me to the worship of God according to the rite of the Christian religion.*[1] By baptismal consecration I become a member of the kingdom of God and I form part of that *chosen generation, the kingly priesthood, the holy nation, the purchased people.*[2]

From that time I participate *as a Christian* in the sacred ministry, although in a remote and indirect manner, by my prayers, by my share in the offering, by my attendance at the sacrifice of the Mass and at the liturgical offices, by multiplying my spiritual sacrifices, by the practice of virtues, as St. Peter recommends, by performing all things with the intention of pleasing God and uniting myself to Him, and by making of my body a living victim, holy and agreeable to God.[3]

This is what you make me understand, Holy Mother Church, when by the priest you say to the faithful : *Orate fratres . . . Pray brethren that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable* . . . " and when the priest says also in the Canon of the Mass : *Remember, Lord . . .* (TV. *and N.*) *and all those who are here present and for whom we offer to Thee or who offer to Thee this sacrifice of praise.* And further on : *We therefore beseech thee, O Lord, to be appeased and to receive this offering of our bounden duty, as also of thy whole household.*[4]

1. Charactere sacramentali insignitur homo ut ad cultum Dei deputatus secundum ritum Christianae religionis (Card. Billot, *De Ecc. Sacram.,* t. I, thes. 2).

2. Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus acquisitionis (I Pet., II, 9).

3. Sacerdotium sanctum, offerre spirituales hostias acceptabiles Deo per Jesum Christum (I Pet., II, 5)—It is in this sense, that St. Ambrose says " Omnes filii Ecclesiae sacerdotes sunt ; ungimur enim in Sacerdotium sanctum offerentes nosmetipsos Deo hostias spirituales (In Lucam, Lib. IV, n. 33—Patr. Lat., t. XV, coi. 1645) Sicut omnes Christianos dicimus, propter mysticum Chrisma ; sic omnes Sacerdotes, quoniam membra sunt unius Sacerdotis (S. Aug., *De civit. Dei,* lib. XX, cap. X, 66. Patr. lat. t. XLI, coi. 676).

4. Memento Domine . . . et omnium circumstantium pro quibus

The holy Liturgy, in fact, is so truly the *common work of the whole Church,* that is to say, of the priest and the people, that the mystery[1] of this unity is always really present in the Church by the indestructible power of the *Communion of Saints* which is proposed to our belief in the Apostles' Creed. The Divine Office and the Holy Mass, which are the principal part of the Liturgy, cannot be celebrated without the whole Church being associated with them and being mystically present.[1]

Thus in the Liturgy *everything is done in common, in the name of all, for the benefit of all.*

This close link which unites the members together by the same faith and by participation in the same Sacraments, produces *fraternal charity* in our souls, and this is the distinctive mark of those who wish to imitate Our Lord and walk in His footsteps. *By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.*[2] This bond between the members of the Church becomes closer in proportion as these members share more fully by the Communion of Saints in the grace and the charity of the Head, who communicates to them supernatural and divine life.

These truths are the *foundation* of the Liturgical Life, which in its turn *brings me back constantly to them.*

tibi offerimus vel qui tibi offerunt hoc sacrificium laudis.—Hanc igitur oblationem servitutis nostrae sed et cunctae familiae tuae quaesumus, Domine, ut placatus accipias (Canon of the Mass). " We all make this offering along with the priest, we consent to all that he does, to all that he says. And what docs he say ? ' Pray, my brethren, that my sacrifice and yours may be agreeable to the Lord Our God.' And what do you answer ? ' May the Lord receive from your hands.' What ? ' My sacrifice and yours.' And what says the priest next ? ' Remember Thy servants for whom we offer.' Is that all ? He adds, ' Or who offer Thee this sacrifice.' Let us then offer with him. Let us offer Jesus Christ ; let us offer up ourselves along with His whole Catholic Church spread over all the earth " (Bossuet, *Méditât, sur l'Evangile.*—Cène, r partie, LXIII jour).

r. S. Peter Damien quoted by D. Gréa : *La Sainte Liturgie,* p-5T.

2. In hoc cognoscent omnes quia discipuli mei estis, si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem (Joan., XIII, 35).

What great love for you, O holy Church of God, does this thought enkindle in my heart! I am one of your members; I am a member of Christ! What love for all Christians this gives me, since they are my brothers and we are all one in Christ! What love for my divine Head, Jesus Christ!

I can be indifferent to nothing that concerns you. Sad when I see you persecuted, I rejoice at the news of your conquests and your triumphs.

What joy to think that in sanctifying myself I also contribute to the increase of your beauty and that I am working for the sanctification of all the children of the Church, my brethren, and even for the salvation of the whole human family!

O Holy Church of God, I wish, as far as it depends on me, to make you more beautiful, more holy, and more full of members; the splendour of your whole body will spring from *the perfection of each of your children,* based on that close fellowship which was the main theme of the prayer of Our Lord after the Last Supper and the true testament of His Heart: *That they may be one . . . that they may be made perfect in one.*[1]

O Holy Mother Church, how moved I am with love and admiration for your liturgical Prayer! Since I am one of your members, *it is my prayer too,* especially when *I assist at it or co-operate in it.* All that you have *is mine* and all that I have *belongs to you.*

A drop of water is nothing; but united with the ocean, it shares in all that power and immensity. So it is with my prayer when it is united to yours. In the eyes of God for whom all things are present, who takes in at one glance the past, the present and the future, *this prayer makes one* with that universal chorus of praise which you have been sending up, ever since you began and which you will continue to send up to the throne of the Eternal till the end of time.

Thou wishest, O Jesus, that my piety should, in certain respects, be utilitarian, and egotistical. But Thou hasti.

i. Ut sint unum . . . ut sint consummati in unum Joan., XVII, 2i, 23).

taught me by the order of the petitions in the *Our Father* how much Thou desirest that my piety should *first of all* be *consecrated to the praise of God,*[1] and that far from being selfish, narrow and isolated, it should make me include in my supplications *all the needs of my brethren.*

Help me by the Liturgical Life to reach that lofty and generous piety which, without any loss to the spiritual combat, gives to God great *praise,* and gives generously; that *charitable, fraternal, universal* piety, which embraces all men and takes an interest in all the cares of the Church.

It is your mission, O holy Church, to bring forth without ceasing new children to your divine Spouse and to bring them up *unto the measure of the age of the fulness of Christ.*[2] Accordingly you have received in abundance all the means to achieve this end. The importance that you attach to the Liturgy proves how efficacious it is *in teaching me how to praise God and make spiritual progress.*

During His public life Our Lord spoke as *one having power.*[3] Thus too do you speak, O holy Church, my Mother. Guardian of the treasure of truth, you realise the importance of your mission; dispenser of the Precious Blood, you know all the means of sanctification which the divine Saviour has entrusted to you.

You do not call on my reason and say to me, "Examine these things, study them." But you do appeal *to my faith,* saying, "Have confidence in me; am I not thy Mother? and what do I desire more than to see you grow from day to day in likeness to your divine Model? Now who knows Christ better than I, who am His Spouse? *Where then will you better find the spirit of your Redeemer than in the Liturgy,* which is the authentic expression of my thoughts and my feelings?"

1. Creatus est homo ad hunc finem, ut Dominum Deum suum laudet, ac revereatur eique serviens tandem salvus fiat (Exerc. spirit. S. Ignatius).

Our end is the service of Our Lord and it is only to serve Him better, that we must correct our defects and acquire virtues; holiness is only a means of better service (Blessed J. Eymard).

2. In mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi (Eph., IV 13).

3. Sicut potestatem habens (Mattii., VII, 20).

Yes, holy and beloved Mother, I will let myself be guided and trained by you, with a child's simplicity and confidence, saying, *It is with my mother that I pray.* She puts her own words on my lips in order that I may be filled with her spirit, and let her thoughts sink into my heart.

With you then, O holy Church, with you [1] will rejoice, *gaudeamus, exultemus ;* with you I shall lament, *ploremus ;* with you I shall praise Him, *confitemini Domino ;* with you I shall implore mercy, *miserere ;* with you I shall hope, *sperabo ;* with you I shall love, *diligam.* I will ardently unite myself with all the requests that you express in your admirable prayers, so that the fruitful movements of mind and will which you wish to elicit from these words and sacred rites, may penetrate more deeply into my heart, make it more pliant to the touch of the Holy Ghost and at last absorb my will into the Will of God.

* * *

2nd Principle. *Whenever I take part as a representative of the Church [1] in any liturgical function, God desires me to give expression to my virtue of religion, by bearing in mind the official mandate with which I am honoured, so that being thus more and more united with the life of the Church, I may progress in all the virtues.*

I am the representative of Thy Church, in order that in her name and in the name of all her children I may offer without ceasing to God through Thee, O Jesus, the sacrifice of praise and supplication ; I am therefore,

1. Those who are thus delegates of the Church are the clerics and religious who are obliged to recite the Office, even though they do so only in private. So too in churches canonically erected are those who are obliged to sing office in choir, and to attend chapter or conventual masses. The same also applies to those who without having received Orders fulfil such functions by the tolerance of the Church, as for instance servers of Mass.

according to the fine phrase of St. Bernardine of Siena, *an official person, the mouth of the whole Church.*[1]

Therefore at every liturgical function there must be in me a kind of *dual personality,* like that which exists for instance in an ambassador. In his private life the ambassador is an ordinary citizen; but once he has put on the insignia of his office, and speaks or acts in the name of his sovereign, he becomes at once the representative and in certain respects *the very person* of his master.

The same is true of me when I am performing my liturgical functions. To my individual personality *is added* a dignity which invests me with a public mandate. I am and I must consider myself then as the delegate, the official deputy of the whole Church.

If I pray, or recite my office, even in private, it is no longer merely in my own name. The words I use were not chosen by me. *It is the Church that places them on my lips.*[2] Therefore it is the Church that prays by my lips, and speaks and acts through me, just as the king acts and speaks by his ambassador. I am then truly, according to the fine expression of St. Peter Damian, the whole church.[3] *Through me the Church is united to the divine religion of Jesus Christ* and addresses to the Most Holy Trinity adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and supplication.

Hence, if I have any appreciation of my dignity, how can I begin my Breviary, for instance, without a *mysterious activity* taking place in my soul and *raising me above myself,* above the natural course of my thoughts, to fill me completely with the conviction that I am in a sense a *mediator* between heaven and earth?[4]

1. Persona publica, totius Ecclesiae os (Sermo XX).

2. Sacerdos personam induit Ecclesiae, verba illius gerit, vocem assumit (Guliel. Paris. *De Sae. Ord.*).

3. Per unitatem fidei, Sacerdos Ecclesia tota est et ejus vices gerit (S. Pet. Damian Opusc. XI, cap. X—Patr. Latr.; t. CXLV, col. 239); —Quid mirum si Sacerdos quilibet . . . vicem Ecclesiae solus expleat . . . cum per unitatis intimae Sacramentum tota spiritualiter sit Ecclesia? (S. Pet. Damian, loc. cit.).

4. Medius stat sacerdos inter Deum et humanam naturam; illinc venientia beneficia ad nos deferens et nostras petitiones illuc perferens (S. John Chrysost. *Hom.* V. n. I. *in illud:* Vidi Dominum).

What a misfortune if I were to forget these truths! The Saints were deeply impressed by them.[1] They lived by them. *God expects me to be mindful of them* when I perform any liturgical function. The Church by her Liturgical Life helps me at every moment not to lose sight of the fact that I am her representative, and *God* demands that I live up to this dignity by leading an exemplary life.[2]

O my God, fill me with a profound esteem for this mission, which the Church has entrusted to me. *What a spur it will be against my sloth in the spiritual combat!* But grant me too a true sense of my dignity as a Christian and give me a childlike attitude towards Thy Church, so that I may

1. Why does the priest, when reciting his Breviary, even when alone, say *Dominus vobiscum?* And why does he answer *Et cum spiritu tuo,* instead of answering, *Et cum spiritu meo?* "No," says St. Peter Damian, "the priest is not alone. When he says Mass or prays, he has before him the whole Church mysteriously present and she it is whom he salutes by saying *Dominus vobiscum.* And then since he represents the Church, she answers him through his own mouth, "*Et cum spiritu tuo.*" (Cf. S. Pet. Damian, *Dom. vob.* c. 6, 10, etc.). It is his thoughts on this subject which we reproduce above.

2. Laudate Dominum; sed laudate de vobis, id est, ut non sola lingua et vox vestra laudet Deum, sed et conscientia vestra, vita vestra, facta vestra (S. August., Enarrat, in Ps. cxLViu, n. 2). Just as men expect you to be holy when you present yourself to them as the ambassador of God, so God requires that you appear before Him as an intercessor of men. An intercessor is an envoy sent from the misery of this earth to the justice of God. Now two conditions are required from an envoy, says St. Thomas, in order that he may be favourably received. The first is that he be a worthy representative of the people who send him; and the second that he be a friend of the prince to whom he is sent. You priest, who have no esteem for your sanctity', would you be a worthy representative of the Christian people, when you do not practise the highest type of Christian virtue? Can you be the friend of God. when you are not even His faithful servant?

If this is true of the indifferent mediator, how much more is it true of one who is in sin? And who can describe the anomaly of his dreadful condition? "Pray for me, Father, you have influence over God," say pious souls. Do you want to know the efficacy of this safeguard so piously invoked? "The barking of dogs is more pleasing to God, than the prayers of such priests." P Caussette, *Manrèze du Prêtre.* j« jour. 2" discours (St. August, Serin. 37).

profit abundantly by the treasures of interior life which are stored in the holy Liturgy.

* *

3rd Principle. *As a priest, when I consecrate the Blessed Eucharist or administer the Sacraments, I must revive my conviction that I am the Minister of Jesus Christ, therefore an* Alter Christus ; *and I must hold, it as certain that it depends on myself if I am to find in the exercise of my duties special graces to acquire the virtues demanded by my priesthood.*[1]

Thy faithful, O Jesus, form one body, but in this body, *all the members have not the same office.*[2] *There are diversities of graces.*[3]

Thou hast willed that a visible sacrifice be left to the Church ; for this Thou hast endowed her with a priesthood, whose *principal duty* is to continue Thine immolation on the altar, and then to distribute Thy Precious Blood by the Sacraments and to sanctify Thy Mystical Body by communicating to it Thy divine Life.

O Sovereign Priest, Thou hast decided *from all eternity* to choose me and consecrate me for Thy minister in order to *carry on through me* Thy Priesthood.[4][5] Thou hast given me Thy powers in order to accomplish by my co-operation *a work greater than the creation of the universe,* the miracle of Transubstantiation and in order to remain by this marvel the sacrificial Victim and the Religion of Thy Church.

1. What is said here of the priest applies also in due proportion to the deacon and subdeacon.
2. Omnia autem membra non eumdem actum habent (Rom., XII, 4).
3. Divisiones gratiarum sunt (I Cor., XII, 4).
4. Ipse est principalis sacerdos, qui in omnibus et per omnes sacerdotes Novi Testamenti offert. Ideo enim quia erat Sacerdos in aeternum instituit Apostolos sacerdotes, ut per ipsos suum sacerdotium exsequeretur (De Lugo, *De Euchar.,* disp. XIX, sect. VI, n. 86).
5. Dei adjutores sumus (I Cor., III, 9).

Now do I understand the enthusiastic words with which the Fathers of the Church seek to express the dignity of the priesthood.[1] Their words logically compel me to consider myself as another Christ, *Sacerdos alter Christus,* by virtue of Thy priesthood, which Thou hast communicated to me.

Is there not in fact an *identification* between Thee and me, since Thy person and mine are so truly one that Thou makest Thine own the words, *Hoc est Corpus maim, Hie est calix Sanguinis mei,* when I pronounce them ?[2] I lend Thee my lips, since in all truth I can say, "*My Body, My Blood."*[3] It is enough that *I wish* to consecrate for Thee to wish it also. Thy Will is blended with mine.

1. The Fathers seem to have exhausted their eloquence in speaking of the dignity of the priest. Their thoughts may be summed up in these words. This dignity surpasses everything created : God alone is greater.—Sublimitas sacerdotis nullis comparationibus potest adaequari (S. Ambr., lib. *de dig. Sacerd.,* cap. II).—Qui sacerdotem dixit, prorsus divinum insinuat virum (S. Dion, Areop.). —Praetulit vos regibus et imperatoribus, praetulit vestrum ordinem ordinibus omnibus, imo ut altius loquar, praetulit vos Angelis et Archangelis, Thronis et Dominationibus (S. Bern., *Sermo ad Past, in Syn.*—Inter apocryp. opp—Patr. lat., t. CLXXXIV, coi. 1086). Perspicuum est illam esse illorum Sacerdotum functionem qua nulla major excogitari potest. Quare merito non solum angeli, sed dii etiam, quia Dei immortalis vim et numen apud nos teneant, appellantur (Cat. Rom., de Ord. I).

2. Reliqua omnia quae dicuntur in superioribus a Sacerdote dicuntur , . . Ubi venitur ut conficiatur venerabile Sacramentum jam non suis sermonibus utitur Sacerdos, sed utitur sermonibus Christi. Ergo sermo Christi hoc conficit Sacramentum. Quis est sermo Christi ? Nempe is quo facta sunt omnia (S. Ambr. *De Sacram.,* lib. IV, cap. IV, n. 14 seq.—Inter dubia opera.—Patr. lat., t. XVI, coi. 439).

Ecce Ambrosius non solum vult sacerdotem loqui in persona Christi, sed etiam non loqui in propria persona, neque illa esse verba sacerdotis. Quia, cum sacerdos assumatur a Christo ut eum repraesentet, et ut Christus per os sacerdotis loquatur, non decuit sacerdotem adhuc retinere in his verbis proprium sermonem (De Logo, *De Euch.,* disp. XI, sect. V, n. 103).

3. Ipse est (Christus) qui sanctificat et immolat ; cum videris sacerdotem offerentem, ne ut sacerdotem esse putes, sed Christi manum invisibiliter extentam . . . Sacerdos linguam suam commodat (S. Joan. Chrysost., Horn., 86 in Joan. n. 4).

In the greatest act that Thou canst perform here below *Thy soul is linked with mine.* I lend to Thee what is most my own, my will; and immediately Thine *becomes one with mine.*

So true is it that it is Thou who dost act by me, that if I dared to say, over the matter of the sacrifice, "This is the Body of Jesus Christ," instead of "This is my Body," the consecration would not be valid.

The Blessed Eucharist is Thy very self, O Jesus, under the appearance of bread. And *each Mass* makes it *more clear to my eyes* that the priest is Thyself, O sole Priest, under the appearance of a man whom Thou hast chosen for Thy Minister.[1]

"Another Christ." I am led to think of these words every time that I administer one of the other Sacraments. Thou alone canst say, in Thy character of Redeemer, *Ego te baptizo, Ego te absolvo* thus exercising a power *as divine as that of creation.* I too utter these same words myself, and the angels are more attentive to them than to the *fiat* which called forth the universe from nothing,[2] since these words are capable, O miracle, of forming God in a soul, and of producing a child of God who shares in the intimate life of the Divinity!

At each priestly function I think I hear Thee say, "O my son, how could you suppose that having made you 'another Christ' by these divine powers, *I should tolerate that in the usual rotetine of your life you should be* "without Christ," *or even* "against Christ?"

"What! In the exercise of these priestly functions, you have just acted in unison with Me; and a few minutes later, it will be Satan who *will come and take My place* and make of you by sin, a sort of Antichrist, or who will lull you into such a state of torpor that you deliberately *forget* the obligation of imitating Me and of *putting Me on,* as my Apostle says.

1. Nil aliud Sacrifex est quam Christi simulacrum (Petr. Bles. *Tract, rythm. de Euch.,* cap. VII).

2. Majus opus est ex impio justum facere quam creare caelum et terram (S. Aug.).

"*Absit!* Let it not be so. When human weakness is *alone* the cause of your daily faults, which you immediately regret and attone for, you can count on My mercy; *but to adopt in cold blood a life of deliberate infidelities and return from these without remorse to your sublime functions, this surely will draw down My anger.*

"There is a great gulf between your functions and those of the priests of the Old Law. And yet, if My prophets uttered dire threats against Sion on account of the sins of the people or their rulers, listen to what resulted from the prevarications of the priests: *The Lord hath accomplished His wrath, He hath poured out His fierce anger; and He hath kindled a fire in Sion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof . . . for the iniquities of her priests.* [1]

"With what severity too does My Church *forbid* the priest to approach the altar or to confer the Sacraments, if there is a single mortal sin on his conscience!

"Under My inspiration she goes further. By her very rites she compels you to be either *truly holy* or an *impostor*. You will have to make up your mind either to live the interior life or else resign yourself to say to Me, from the beginning to the end of the Mass, *what you do not really think and ask what you do not desire.* The sacred words and ceremonies of necessity demand in the priest a spirit of compunction and freedom from the slightest faults, and therefore custody of the heart; a spirit of adoration, and therefore of recollection; a spirit of faith, hope and love, and therefore a supernatural aim in all you say and do, and in your whole ministry."

I fully realise, O Jesus, that to put on the sacred vestments, without being *firmly resolved* to try to acquire the virtues which they symbolise, would be a kind of *hypocrisy*. It is my will that henceforth genuflections, signs of the cross, and other forms and ceremonies, must never be a *vain sham*, concealing emptiness, coldness, indifference to the interior life, and thus adding to my faults that of a lying display before the face of the Eternal God.i.

i. Lamentationes (IV, 11, 13).

Let then a holy tear come upon me every time that I draw near to Thy dread mysteries and every time that I put on the liturgical vestments! Let the prayers with which I accompany this act, the formulas so full of strength and unction in the Missal and the Ritual, *move me to search into my heart, so as to find out whether it is in harmony with Thine,* O Jesus, whether I have a loyal and practical desire *to imitate Thee by leading an interior life!*

O my soul, away with those compromises, which might lead me to think it enough to be "alter Christus" only during my sacred functions, and to believe that afterwards, provided that I am not actually "against Christ," I need take no trouble *to put on Jesus Christ.*

Seeing that I am not only an ambassador of *Jesus Crucified,* but still more another Christ, shall I attempt to shelter myself under an *easy-going piety* and *commonplace virtues?*

It is useless for me to try to persuade myself that the monk in the cloister is bound more than I am to strive to imitate Our Lord and to acquire an interior life. This is a *grave error* based on a confusion of thought.

In order to attain holiness, the religious binds himself to the use of *certain means:* vows of obedience and poverty, and keeping his Rule. As a secular priest I am not bound to the use of these means, but I am obliged to pursue and realise the *same* end, and I am so obliged by *many more considerations* than the consecrated soul who does not have the responsibility of dispensing the fruits of the Precious Blood.[1] V,

1. Vos estis lux mundi, vos estis sal terrae. Quod si sal evanuerit in quo salietur? (Matth., V, 13).—Exemplum esto fidelium in verbo, in conversatione, in caritate, in fide, in castitate (I Tim., IV, 12).—In divino omni quis audeat aliis dux fieri, nisi secundum omnem habitum suum factus sit Deo formissimus et Deo simillimus (S. Dionys., *De eccl. hieri).*—Sacerdos debet vitam habere immaculatam, ut omnes in illum, veluti in aliquod exemplum excellens, intueantur (S. Joan. Chrysos., *Hom. loin Tim.).*—Nihil in sacerdote commune cum multitudine. Vita sacerdotis praeponderare debet, sicut praeponderat gratia (S. Amb., *Epis.,* 82).—Aut ceteris honestiores aut fabula omnibus sunt sacerdotes (S. Bern., *De consid.,*

Woe to me then if I deceive myself with an illusion that is beyond doubt *culpable,* since it could easily have been dispelled if I had only consulted the *teaching of the Church and her saints;* an illusion, the falseness of which will be brought home to me on the threshold of eternity!

Woe to me if I do not know how to profit by my liturgical functions to discover what God *demands* of me, or if I remain deaf to the voices of all the sacred objects that surround me: the altar, the confessional, the baptismal font, the vessels, the sacred linen and vestments. *Imitate what you handle.*[1] *Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord.*[2] *They offer . . . the bread of their God and therefore they shall be holy.*[3]

I shall be so much the less excusable for shutting my ears to these appeals, O Jesus, in as much as *each* of my functions is the occasion of an *actual grace* which Thou offerest me to form my soul to Thy image and likeness. *The Church solicits this grace*; her heart, jealously eager to come up to Thine expectation, takes care of me like the apple of her eye; at my ordination she puts before me the serious consequences involved in my identification with Thee.

Impone, Domine, capiti meo galeam salutis . . . praecinge me cingulo puritatis . . . Ut indulgere digneris omnia

lib. IV, c. 6).—Sicut illi qui ordinem suscipiunt, super plebem constituuntur gradu Ordinis, ita et superiores sint merito sanctitatis (S. Thom., Suppi., q. 35).—Sic decet omnino clericos in sortem Domini vocatos, vitam moresque suos omnes componere, ut habitu, gestu, incessu, sermone, aliisque omnibus rebus nihil nisi grave, moderatum ac religione plenum prae se ferent (Cone. Trid., sess. 22, c. i, *de Reform.*).—Si religiosus careat ordine, manifestum est excellere praeeminentiam Ordinis quantum ad dignitatem, quia per sacrum ordinem aliquis deputatur ad dignissima ministeria, quibus ipsi Christo servitur in sacramento altaris; ad quod requiritur major sanctitas interior, quam requirat etiam religionis status (S. Thom., 2.2, q. 84).—Vix bonus monachus facit bonum clericum (S. Aug., *ad Val.*).—Nullam ascensus et deificationis mensuram agnoscant (S. Greg. Naz).—Pares Deo conentur esse sanctitate, ut qui viderit ministrum altaris, Dominum veneretur (S. Ambr., de Offic., c. 5)

1. *Roman Pontifical:* Imitamini quod tractatis.
2. Mundamini qui fertis vasa Domini (Is., LII, 11).
3. Panes offerunt Deo, et ideo sancti erunt (Levit., XXI, 6).

peccata mea. Fac me tuis semper inhaerere mandatis et a te nunquam separari permittas, etc. It is not I alone who make these requests for myself; all the true faithful, all the fervent souls consecrated to Thee, all the members of the Church's hierarchy make my poor prayer their own. Their cry rises to Thy throne; it is the voice of Thy Spouse which Thou dost hear. *When Thy ministers are resolved to pursue the interior life and therefore put their hearts in harmony with their liturgical functions, Thou dost always grant these entreaties made for them by the Church.*

Instead then of depriving myself by my voluntary negligence of the suffrages which I address to Thy Father for the body of the faithful, whenever I say Holy Mass or administer the Sacraments, *I wish to profit by these graces,* **O** my Saviour. In each of my priestly actions *I shall open my heart wide to Thine influence.* Thou wilt then shed upon it light, consolation, and strength, which in spite of all obstacles will enable me to *identify with Thine all my judgments, affections and desires, just as my Priesthood identifies me with Thee,* Eternal Priest, when through me Thou dost become a Victim on the altar, or the Redeemer of souls.



I sum up here in a few words the three principles of the liturgical life.

Cum Ecclesia. When I unite with the Church *as a simple Christian,* this very union impels me to share in her thoughts and feelings.

Ecclesia. When so to speak I am the Church itself, that is, when I am acting as her *ambassador* before the Throne of God, I am all the more powerfully drawm to make her aspirations my own, so as to be less unworthy of addressing myself to the thrice-holy Majesty, and to exercise *by my official prayer* a more fruitful Apostolate.

Christus. But when by my sharing in the Priesthood of Christ, I am "another Christ," what terms can express the insistence of Thine appeals, 0 Jesus, when Thou dost

call me to take on more and more of Thy divine likeness, and thus show Thee to the faithful and by the *Apostolate of good example* move them to follow in Thy footsteps ?

IY.—The Advantages of the Liturgical Life

(a) It helps me to be permanently supernatural in all my actions.

How difficult I find it, O my God, to act as a rule by supernatural motives ! My self-love, helped by Satan and by creatures, prevents my soul and my faculties from being dependent on Jesus living within me.

How often during the day is this purity of intention, which *alone* can render my actions meritorious and my apostolate successful, how often is it ruined *through lack of vigilance or offidelity* ! Only as the result of continual efforts am I able to obtain with God's help the power to ensure that most of my actions may have *grace as the life-giving principle, which directs them to God as towards their end.*

For me to make these efforts mental prayer is indispensable. But what a difference it makes, when this striving for purity of intention is offered in the centre of the liturgical Life ! Mental Prayer and the liturgical life are two sisters who help each other. Mental prayer, taking place before my Mass and my Office, *places me in a supernatural atmosphere.*

The liturgical life gives me the means of *transmitting my mental prayer to all the actions of the day.*[1]

***

When 1 am taught by you, O holy Church, *how easy it is for me to acquire the habit* of rendering to my Creator and Father at all times the worship which is His due !

I. " I make a good meditation in order to say my Mass well; and 1 say my Mass and I recite my Office with devotion in order to make my mental prayer well next day" (Fr. Olivaint).

You are the Spouse of Him who is Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation and Mediation in the highest degree, and you communicate to me, by the Liturgy, *that thirst* which Jesus had to glorify His Father ; and this is the *first end* you had in view when you established the Liturgy.

It is clear that if I live the liturgical life, I shall be filled with the *virtue of religion,* since the whole Liturgy is nothing but the continual and public exercise of that virtue which is the most excellent after the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity.

If I make use of the light of faith, there is no doubt that piety, vigilance, courage in the spiritual combat, and *the subjection of all my faculties to God* can be developed in my soul. But how greatly this human being of mine, composed of body and soul, needs the assistance of all its faculties in order to fix its mind on eternal things, fill its heart with eager enthusiasm to profit by them, and excite its will to ask for them repeatedly and to pursue them unceasingly !

The Liturgy *takes possession of my whole being.* The whole combination of ceremonies, genuflections, bowings, symbols, chants, texts, appealing to the eye, to the ear, to the feelings, to the imagination, to the intelligence, to the heart, directs me wholly and entirely to God ; it reminds me that everything that is in me, *os, lingua, mens, sensus, vigor,* must be directed to God.

Everything used by the Church to remind me of the *rights of God* and His claim to my filial w'orship and my total dependence on Him, develops in me the virtue of religion and by that means the supernatural spirit.

Everything in the Liturgy *speaks to me of God,* of His *perfections,* His *mercies* ; everything *leads me back to God,* shows me how His *Providence* is ever holding out to my soul the means of sanctification by trials, help from on high, warnings, encouragement, promises, light, yes, even in His threats.

The Liturgy also makes me continually *speak to God* and give expression to my religion under the most varied forms.

If I give myself up to this liturgical training, with the

earnest desire of profiting by it, surely after the profusion of exercises which follow every day from my functions as a minister of the Church, surely the virtue of religion will strike its roots ever more deeply into my soul? Surely I shall form a habit, *a state of mind,* and that means a true interior life?



The Liturgy is a *school of the Presence of God,* and of the Presence of God as He has shown it in the Incarnation! Or rather, it is a *School of the Presence of Jesus and of Love.*

Love is fostered by the knowledge of the loveableness of the beloved, by the proofs of love which He has given, but above all, says St. Thomas, by His presence.

The Liturgy reproduces for us, explains and applies these various manifestations of the life of Jesus among us. *It kee-fs us permanently in a supernatural and divine atmosphere* by prolonging, so to speak, the life of Our Lord, and by showing us in all these mysteries the love and tenderness of His heart.

Thou, O Jesus, by the Liturgy dost continue Thy great lesson and the great revelation of Thy love. I see Thee more and more not through the eyes of the historian, that is to say, veiled by the centuries, nor through the eyes of the theologian, as the object of arduous speculations. Thou art *quite close to me.* Thou art someone that each member of the Church *lives with,* and whom the Liturgy shows me at all times *in theforefront* of my life, as the model and the object of my affection.

By the Cycle of Thy feast days, by the lessons chosen from Thy Gospel and from the writings of Thine Apostles, and by the splendour with which she makes the Sacraments and, above all, Thy Blessed Eucharist, shine forth, *the Church makes Thee live among us and lets us hear the beating of Thy Heart.*

What a mighty source of supernatural life my mental prayer gives me by impressing on me *the belief that Our*

Lord lives in me and that He wishes to act on my soul, if I put no obstacle in His way. But frequently during the day by the varied and sensible means which the Liturgy supplies, I can nourish my mind and heart with *the dogma of grace,* of Jesus praying, acting with each of the members of whom He is the life, and whose deficiencies He supplies, as He also does mine ; thus I can keep myself under the permanent influence of the supernatural, thus can I live in union with Jesus and be established in His love.

Love of complacency, of benevolence, of preference, of hope—all these forms shine forth in the wonderful collects of the Mass, in the psalms, the ceremonies, the prayers, and penetrate my soul.

This manner of contemplating Our Lord *as living and always present,* will make my interior life strong and generous. And when some act of detacliment or of self-denial may be required to keep my life supernatural, when some difficult duty has to be done, some pain or insult to be endured, then the spiritual combat, the virtue, or the trial, will lose its painful and disagreeable side if, *instead of looking at the bare Cross, I look at Thee nailed to it,* O my Saviour, and hear Thee ask me, showing me Thy Wounds, for this sacrifice as a proof of my love.

The Liturgy gives me strong support in another way by repeatedly reminding me that I am not alone. *I am not alone* in the fight against my natural impulses, which ever threaten to overwhelm me. The Church, concerned about my incorporation with Christ, *follows me as a mother,* giving me a share in the merits of millions of souls with whom I am in communion, and who speak the same language of official love as I do and she renews my confidence that the souls in Heaven and Purgatory are here with me to encourage and assist me.

♦

Nothing is so effective in keeping the soul directed towards God in all its acts as the *mindfulness of eternity.*

Everything in the Liturgy recalls *Novissima mea,* my

last end ; the expressions *Vita aeterna, Caelum, Infernum, Mors, Saeculum saeculi,* and other similar phrases, occur often. *Prayers and Offices for the dead, funeral services,* bring before my eyes death, judgment, eternal rewards ox-punishments, the value of time and the purification necessary here below or in Purgatory if I am ever to enter into Heaven.

The *feasts of the saints* speak to me of the glory of those who have gone before me here on earth, and show me the crown which is in store for me, if I follow in their footsteps and imitate their example.

By these lessons the Church is ever crying out to me, " Beloved soul, look to the everlasting years so as to remain faithful to your motto, *God in all things, always, everywhere."*

O Divine Liturgy, if 1 were to acknowledge all the blessings that I owe to you, I should have to mention all the virtues. Thanks to the texts taken from Scripture that you continually put before my eyes, thanks to the rites and symbols which express the divine mysteries to me, my soul is *constantly raised above this earth* and directed, now towards the theological virtues, now towards the fear of God, horror for sin and for the worldly spirit, and again towards detachment, compunction, confidence or spiritual joy.

(b) It helps me most powerfully to conform my interior Life to that of Our Lord.

There are three sentiments which prevail in Thy Heart, O adorable Master : *complete dependence* upon Thy Father, and therefore *perfect humility ;* then secondly *a burning and universal love for men* ; and finally the *spirit of sacrifice.*

Perfect Humility. At Thine entry into the world, Thou didst say, *Behold 1 come . . . that I should do Thy Will, O God.*[1] Thou dost often remind us that all Thine inneri.

1. Ingrediens mundum dicit : Hostiam et oblationem noluisti. . . Tunc dixi : Ecce venio --- ut faciam, Deus, voluntatem tuam (Hebr., X, 5, 7).

life is summed up in the constant desire to *do always the things that please* the Father.[1] Thou art obedience itself, O Lord, *becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross.*[2] Now even, Thou dost obey Thy priests; at their word Thou dost descend to the earth, *the Lord obeying the voice of a man*[3]

What a fine school the Liturgy is in which to learn to imitate Thy submission, if my heart *will only respond to the smallest rites* with the desire of forming a spirit of dependence on God and of unflinchingly taming this *self* of mine so eager for liberty; and of *bending* my judgment and my will, ahvays prone to stray away from the *fundamental spirit,* which Thou, O Jesus, hast come to teach by Thine example, the worship of the Will of God.

Every time that I sink my own personality in order to obey the Church as I would obey Thee Thyself, and *to act in her name and unite myself to her,* and thus unite myself to Thee, I am doing a valuable service for the improvement of my soul; my fidelity to the least prescriptions of the rubrics will train me *to humble my pride* on more difficult occasions.[4]

Nor is this all; by constantly reminding me of the *reality of Thy life in me* and of the *necessity of Thy grace* if I am to make use of even the simplest thought, the Liturgy fights against the presumption and the self-conceit which could destroy all my interior life. The *Per Dominum Nostrum* which ends almost all the prayers of the Liturgy reminds me, if I ever should forget it that by myself I can do nothing, absolutely nothing, except commit sin or perform acts that have no merit. Everything convinces me of the *necessity of having frequent recourse to Thee,*

1. Ego quae placita sunt ei, facio semper (Joan., VIII, 29) Meus cibus est ut faciam voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan., IV, 34). Descendi de caelo non ut faciam voluntatem meam, sed voluntatem ejus qui misit me (Joan., VI, 38).
2. Factus obediens usque ad mortem, mortem autem crucis (Philipp., II, 8).
3. Obediente Domino voci hominis (Jos, X, 14).
4. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater (Luc., XVI, 10).

everything keeps telling me that Thou dost require from me this humble appeal, so that my life may not go astray in pursuit of a misleading mirage.

The Church by means of her Liturgy strives anxiously to persuade her children of the necessity of supplication. Of this Liturgy she makes a true *School of Prayer* and therefore of humility. By her formulas, by the Sacraments and Sacramentals she teaches that *everything comes to me through Thy Precious Blood,* and that the great means of obtaining its fruits, is to unite myself by humble prayer to Thy strong desire to apply them to us.

Let me then profit by these continual lessons, O Jesus, in order to increase the vivid realisation of my nothingness, to convince myself that *I am but a tiny particle in the Host which is Thy Mystical Body, and that in the immense chorus of praise which Thou dost conduct, I am but a feeble voice.* Thanks to the Liturgy, I can see more and more clearly that it is by humility that 1 can make that voice *purer and clearer* and that particle *ever more white.*

Universal Charity. Thy Heart, O Jesus, has extended to all men its mission of redemption.

From the Cross Thou hast cried out " Sitio " to the world ; and Thou still continues! to make it echo upon the altar and even in the midst of Thy glory. The answer to this cry, even from an ordinary Christian, must be a *strong desire to spend oneself for one's brethren ; a burning thirst for the salvation of all men, and for the spreading of the Gospel ; great zeal for the encouragement of priestly and religious vocations ; and earnest prayers that the faithful may understand the extent of their duties, and that souls consecrated to God may feel the necessity of the interior life.*

These desires should inflame to a much greater degree the souls of Thy ministers ; the rites they perform constantly remind them that Thou hast given them a special place in Thy Mystical Body, in order that they may incorporate in Thee as many souls as possible ; and that they are co-redeemcrs, mediators, bound to weep *between*

the porch and the altar [1] over the sins of the world, and to sanctify themselves, not alone on their own account, but also in order *to be able to sanctify others,* and to form, instruct, and guide souls and make Thy life course through their veins. *And for them do I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.*[2]

Holy Church of the Redeemer, Mother of all my brethren, your children, how can I live your Liturgical Life without sharing the strong desire that the Heart of your divine Spouse feels for the salvation of His creatures and the deliverance of the souls that groan in Purgatory[3].

True it is that I have a chosen share in the fruits of the Mass which I say, and of the Office which I recite. But it is your intention that the *first share* should go to the whole group of souls which are in your care: "Which we offer Thee first of all for thy Holy Catholic Church."[3] You take countless means to expand my heart with love of God and to conform my interior life to that of Jesus.

O Beloved Life of the Liturgy, increase my *filial love for Holy Church* and for the common Father of all the faithful. Make me more devoted and more submissive to my hierarchical superiors and more in unison with their cares. Help me *to remember that Jesus lives in each one of those whom I meet every day* and that He holds them all in His Heart. Make me resolve to radiate to them a spirit of forbearance, kindness, patience, and of readiness to help so that I may thus reflect the meekness of the sweet Saviour.

Keep well before me the conviction that I cannot reach Heaven but *by the Cross,* and that my praises, my adoration, sacrifices and all my other acts are of no value for Heaven except *through the Precious Blood of Jesus;* and that it is in union *with all Christians* that I am to gain heaven, since it is *with all the elect* that I am to enjoy it, and to con-

1. Inter vestibulum et altare plorabunt sacerdotes (Joel, II, 17).
2. Ego sanctifico meipsum ut sint et ipsi sanctificari (Ioan., XVII, 19).
3. In primis quae tibi offerimus pro Ecclesia tua sancta catholica (Canon of the Mass).

tinue with them through Jesus, for all eternity, the chorus of praise, in which I have a part here on earth.

Spirit oî Sacrifice. O Jesus, Thou knowest that mankind cannot be saved except by sacrifice, and therefore Thou hast made a perpetual immolation of all Thy life on earth. Identified with Thee, acting as priest with Thee when I celebrate Mass, O divine sufferer on the Cross, with Thee I wish to be a *victim. Everything in Thee revolves around Thy Cross; everything in me shall revolve around my Mass; it will be the centre and the sun of my days, as Thy sacrifice is the central act of the Liturgy.* This Liturgy which brings me always by way of the Altar and the Tabernacle to the thought of *Calvary,* will be for me a *School of the spirit of Sacrifice.* By making me share in the sentiments of Thy Church, it will communicate Thine own sentiments to me, O Jesus, and thus I shall realise in my fife the words of St. Paul, *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,*[1] along with those other words which were spoken to me at my ordination, *Imitate what you perform.*[2]

The Missal, the Ritual, and the Breviary will remind me in many different ways, were it only by the countless signs of the cross, that sacrifice has become since the Fall the *law of the human race,* and that it has no value except in so far as it is united with Thy sacrifice. I shall render Thee then *victim for victim.* I shall make a total immolation of myself, a sacrifice that will wholly *merge with Thine consummated once on Golgotha and renewed many times every minute in the Masses which are said in unending succession over the whole world.*

The Liturgy will make this oblation of myself much easier for me and will enable me to contribute more *towards filling up those things that are wanting of Thy sufferings for Thy Body which is the Church.*[3]

1. Hoc sentite in vobis quod et in Christo Jesu (Philipp., II, 5).
2. Imitamini quod tractatis (Roman Pontifical).
3. Adimpleo quae desunt passionum Christi pro corpore ejus quod est Ecclesia (Coloss., I, 24).

I shall contribute my share and join it to this great Sacrificial Host which is made up of the *sacrifices of all Christians*; [1] and this Host will ascend to heaven to expiate the sins of the world and draw down on the Church militant and the Church suffering the fruits of Thy Redemption.

I shall in this way lead a true liturgical life. For when I "put on" Thee, O Jesus crucified, and unite myself in a practical way to Thy Sacrifice, by making a holocaust of myself through following Thy counsel, *Let him deny himself,* is not that, O my Saviour, the goal to which Thy Church wishes to lead me, while instilling Thy sentiments into me by her prayers and holy ceremonies, and putting into my heart *what in Thee dominated everything, the Spirit of Sacrifice?* [2]

Thus I shall become one of those living, chosen stones which, polished by trials, *Scalpri salubris ictibus et tunsione plurima, Fabri polita malleo,* [3] are destined to be used in the construction of the heavenly Jerusalem.

(c) The liturgical Life makes me live the Life of the Blessed in Heaven.

But our conversation is in heaven, [4] said St. Paul. Where shall I better learn how to carry out his instruction

1. Tota ipsa redempta civitas, hoc est congregatio societasque sanctorum, universale Sacrificium ofiertur Deo per Sacerdotem magnum, qui etiam obtulit in Passione pro nobis, ut tanti capitis corpus essemus . . . Cum itaque nos hortatus esset Apostolus ut exhibeamus corpora nostra hostiam viventem . . . Hoc est Sacrificium Christianorum; multi unum corpus in Christo. Quod etiam sacramento altaris, fidelibus noto, frequentat Ecclesia, ubi ei demonstratur quod in ea re, quam offert, ipsa offertur (S. Aug., *De Civit. Dei,* lib. X, cap. VI).

2. Tum demum sacerdoti hostia proderit si seipsum hostiam faciens velit humiliter et efficaciter imitari quod agit (Petr. Blesens., *Epist.,* CXXII1). Qui passionis Dominicae mysteria celebramus, debemus imitari quod agimus. Tunc ergo vere pro nobis Hostia erit Deo, cum nosmetipsos Hostiam fecerimus (S. Greg., *Dialog.,* lib. IV, cap. LIX).

3. Dedication of a Church; Rom. Brev. Hymn at Vespers.

4. Conversatio nostra in caelis est (Philipp., III, 20).

than in the Liturgy ? This Liturgy of earth is simply an imitation of the *heavenly liturgy* that John the Beloved Disciple has described in his Apocalypse. When I chant or recite my Office, what else am I doing but fulfilling the same function with which the angels are honoured before the throne of the Eternal God ?

More than that, the doxology of every psalm, the conclusion of every prayer casts me down in *adoration before the Blessed Trinity*.

The numerous feasts of *the Saints* make me live, as it were, *in intimacy* with my brothers in Paradise who protect me and pray for me. The feasts of the *Blessed Virgin* remind me that I have on high a Mother full of loving kindness who is all powerful, and who will not rest till she beholds me in safety at her feet in the kingdom of her Son. Could it be possible that all these feasts, that the *mysteries* of my sweet Saviour, Christmas, Easter, and especially the Ascension, should not give me that *home-sickness for Heaven* which St. Gregory regards as a pledge of predestination ?

V. Practice of the Liturgical Life

Good Master, Thou hast deigned to explain to me the Liturgical Life ; shall I offer the calls of my ministry as a pretext for avoiding *the effort* that Thou dost ask of me in order to put it into practice ? Assuredly Thou wilt answer that to fulfil the liturgical functions in the way Thou dost desire *will take no more time* than it does to perform them mechanically. Thou wilt ask me to consider as an *example* the vast number of Thy servants, Blessed Father Perboyre amongst others,[1] who, entrusted by Thee with continual and absorbing occupations to a really intense degree, were nevertheless a chosen band of souls deeply imbued with the liturgical spirit.

1. See his " Life," Book III, c. VIII and IX, Paris, 1890.

(a) Remote preparation.

Grant, O my Saviour, that my desire for the Liturgical Life may manifest itself by a great *spirit of faith* with regard to everything that has to do with the divine worship. Thy Saints and Angels see Thee face to face ; nothing can distract their minds from the sublime functions which form one of the elements of their unutterable joy. But how can I, still burdened with all the weakness inherent to human nature, how' can I *keep myself in Thy presence* w'hen I unite with the Church in addressing Thee, if Thou dost not increase in my soul the gift of faith which I received at Baptism ?

May I never come to regard the liturgical functions as a burdensome task to be got over as soon as possible, or something to be put up with because fees are attached to them. Never, I hope, will I dare to speak to the thrice holy God or perform His rites in a free and easy way that I should be ashamed to manifest towards the humblest servant. *May I never give scandal in those things which were designed to edify !* And yet, can I foresee w'here I should stop, once I began to neglect being watchful with regard to the spirit of faith ?

O my God, if I am already slipping down this incline, deign to hold me back, or rather grant me so lively a faith, that I will be convinced of the *importance which all these liturgical acts really possess in Thine eyes,* and will rejoice at realising their sublimity and increase the enthusiasm of my will.

Would I have the slightest spirit of faith if I took no trouble to know the *Rubrics* and to observe them ? The finest thoughts on the Liturgy could not excuse this neglect in Thy sight, 0 God. It matters not if I feel no natural attraction for this w'ork ; it is enough for me to know' that *my obedience* pleases Thee and that it *will be profitable to my soul.*

During my retreats I shall never fail to *examine myself on this point with regard to the Missal, the Ritual and the Breviary.*

Thy Church, 0 Jesus, has chiefly drawn upon the treasures of the *Psalms* for her worship. If I have the liturgical spirit, my soul will be able to see Thee, in the extracts from the Psalter, especially *in Thy sufferings.* I will realise that those intimate words, *those deep feelings and thoughts* that Thy Heart addressed to God during Thy life on earth, are to be found in a great number of the prophetical passages with which Thou hast inspired the Psalmist. And there shall I find, marvellously summed up long before, the principal *teachings of Thy Gospel.*

Under these same veils I shall hear the *voice of the Church* as she carries on Thy fife of trials, and expresses to God, in the midst of all her sufferings and her triumphs, sentiments that echo those of her divine Spouse ; sentiments which *every soul* in whom Thy life is manifested may apply to itself in all its temptations, defeats, struggles, sorrows, discouragement, disappointment, as well as in its victories and consolations.

If I set aside part of my *reading time* for *Holy Scriphire,* I shall develop my taste for the Liturgy and make it easier to devote more attention to the words.1

Attention and reflection will show that every liturgical composition has a *central idea* round which the different, teachings are grouped.

What weapons you shall forge, O my soul, in this way *against my roving imagination,* especially if you understand how to learn from *symbols !* The Church makes use of symbols to speak to the senses in a language which captivates them by making the truths that are represented sensible. *Agnoscite quod agitis,* was said to me by the Church at my ordination. *Ceremonies, sacred linen, altar objects, vestments,* to all these the Church, my Mother, gives a voice full of meaning. If I do not possess the key to this instruction, how can I enlighten the understanding and touch the hearts of the faithful, whom the *Church wants* to impress by this language as simple as it is imposing ?

1. Plus lucratur qui orat et intelligit quam qui tantum lingua orat. Nam qui intelligit reficitur quantum ad intellectum et quantum ad affectum (S. Thom., in I Cor., XIV, 14).

(b) Immediate preparation.

Before sprayer prepare thy soul.[1] Immediately before Mass and every' time I read my Breviary, I shall make a calm but firm act of *recollection, in order to take my mind off* what does not relate to God and to *fix my attention* upon Him. He to whom I am about to speak is God. But He is also my Father. *Therefore to the reverence and awe* which even the Queen of Angels retains when she speaks to her divine Son, I shall unite the simple candour, which gives *the soul of a little child* even to an old man, when he addresses the infinite Majesty.

This simple and childlike attitude before my Father will reflect my conviction that I am united to Jesus Christ and that I represent the Church in spite of my unworthiness, and that I am certain of having as companions in my prayer the spirits of the heavenly host: *I will sing praise to Thee in the sight of the Angels.*[2]

For you, O my soul, it is no longer the time to reason, to meditate; you must become *like a little child.* When you reached the age of reason, you accepted everything that your mother said as being absolute truth. So you must with the same simplicity and candour receive from your *Mother the Church* everything that she presents to you as nourishment for your faith.

The soul must renew its childlike state; this is indispensable. The more I form in myself the *soul of a child,* the more shall I profit by the treasures of the Liturgy and be possessed by the poetry which appears in it. This will be the measure of my progress in the liturgical spirit.

Then my soul will easily *enter into adoration and remain in it* during whatever function (ceremony, Office, Mass, Sacraments, etc.) I take part in whether as member or ambassador of the Church or as minister of God.

On the manner of my *entering into adoration* will depend to a great extent not only the profit and merit of the liturgical act, but also the consolations which God reserves for

1. Ante orationem praepara animam tuam (Eccli., XVIII, 23).
2. In conspectu angelorum psallam tibi (Ps. cxxxvn).

its perfect accomplishment ; and these consolations are to be my support in my apostolic labours.

I desire *to adore.* I desire by an act of my will to unite my adoration with that of the God-Man, so as to offer to God this combined homage ; it will be an effort of *the heart* rather than of the mind.

I desire it with Thy grace, O Jesus ; and this grace I implore, for instance, in the Office by the *Deus in adjutorium* and in the Mass by the *Introibo* slowly and attentively recited. *I desire it ;* and it is this desire, filial and affectionate, strong and humble, united to an earnest request for Thy help, that Thou *requirest from me.*

If I reach the point where my intellect shows to my faith beautiful vistas, or my feelings present it with some pious emotion, my will shall *profit by it* to adore more easily. But I will always remember this principle, *that union with God, when all is said, resides in the superior part of the soul, in the will,* and that even though darkness and aridity be its lot, this faculty of the will, though dry and cold in itself, will then wing its flight, supported by *faith alone.*

(c) Fulfilment of the liturgical function.

To perform the liturgical functions well is a gift of Thy bounty, 0 my God. *Omnipotens et misericors Deus, de cujus munere venit ut tibi a fidelibus tuis digne et laudabiliter serviatur* ; 1 deign to grant me this gift, Lord. I want to *remain an adorer* during the liturgical act. *This sums up every method.*

My will has placed my heart at the feet of the Majesty of God and keeps it there ; I sum up all its work in the three words, *digne, attente, devote* (from the prayer *Aperi),* and they express exactly what ought to be the attitude of my body, my mind and my heart.

Digne. By my respectful posture and bearing, by the exact pronunciation of the words, going more slowly at the important parts, by careful observance of the rubrics, byi.

i. Prayer of the 12th Sunday after Pentecost.

the tone of my voice and by my *way of making* the signs of the Cross, genuflections, etc., my body will make clear not only that *I know to whom I am speaking, what I say,* what *apostolate* I can at times practise,1 but also that *my heart is in what I am doing.*

In the courts of the kings of this earth simple servants consider the smallest positions important and unconsciously adopt a solemn and majestic manner. Shall I ever manage to acquire this *distinctive bearing,* which will be shown by the *attitude of my mind* and the *dignity of my demeanour* in the performance of my functions, I who form part of the guard of honour of the King of kings and of the God of all Majesty ?

1. Apostolate or Scandal. For many of the faithful who see religion through a vague intellectualism or ritualism, a whole sermon given by an indifferent priest is often far less effectual than the apostolate of the true priest, whose strong faith, compunction and piety shine forth on the occasion of a baptism, funeral or above all a Mass. Words and rites are arrows capable of piercing these hearts. Liturgy when it is so *lived* shows forth to them the true Mystery ; the Invisible comes into existence, and invites them to invoke that Jesus, almost unknown to them, but with whom they feel this priest is in intimate communication.

On the other hand, a lessening or loss of their faith follows when, disgusted, they exclaim, " No, indeed, it is not possible that this priest believes in God and fears Him, since he celebrates Mass, baptises, recites prayers, performs ceremonies in that fashion." What a responsibility ! Who will dare maintain that such scandals will not be visited with a rigorous judgment ?

The manifestation of reverential fear, or, on the contrary, insolent nonchalance in the sacred functions can have great influence over the faithful for good or evil.

Once when I was a student in a university and away from any clerical influence, I happened by chance to see a priest reciting his Breviary ; he was unaware of my presence. His bearing which was full of respect and of religion was a revelation to me, and I felt a strong desire to pray henceforth and to pray trying to imitate this priest. To me the Church appeared, as it were, crystalised in this worthy minister, in communion with his God.

By contrast a loyal soul made this avowal to me not long ago : " When I saw the way in which a parish priest dashed through his Mass, I was quite upset and convinced that he could have no faith. From that time I gave up praying, even believing, and a kind of loathing caused by the fear of seeing this priest saying Mass again kept me away from church."

Attente. My mind will be full of eagerness to gather from the words and the sacred rites everything that can nourish my heart. Sometimes my attention will be fixed on the *literal sense* of the texts. I shall remain faithful to the *Mens concordet voci,*[1] whether I follow each phrase or, while continuing my recitation of the prayers, I meditate at length on a word or sentence which has struck my attention, until such time as I feel the need of seeking the honey of devotion in some other flower.

At other times my mind will be occupied with the *mystery of the day* or the *leading idea* of the liturgical period. But the mind will play a secondary part to the will ; the mind will serve only as *the provider* to help my will *to remain in adoration or to return to that state.*

As soon as distractions come I will return to this act of adoration without irritation, without harshness, without a sudden violent jerk, but *gently,* like everything that is done with Thy help, O Jesus, and *vigorously,* in the manner of one who really desires to co-operate with Thy help.

Devote. This is the most important point. Everything must be directed to making the Office and every liturgical function *an act of piety,* and consequently an act of the heart. *Overhaste is the death of devotion.* Such is the *principle* laid down by St. Francis de Sales in speaking of the Breviary and it applies *a fortiori* to the Mass. Hence I lay down this rule for myself, to devote about *half an hour to my* Mass, so that not only the Canon, but also all the other parts may be recited devoutly. I shall reject pitilessly all *pretexts* for performing this central act of my day in a hurry. If the force of habit leads me to garble certain words or ceremonies, I will apply myself, even overdoing it for awhile, and go *very slowly* at these faulty places.[2] With due

1. The thought should be in agreement with the voice (Rule of St. Benedict).

2. A writer of the last century as notorious for his impiety as he was famous for the realism of his descriptions, wishing to caricature a person who talked volubly without knowing what he was talking about, could find no better comparison than to say he spoke like a priest " who hurries slovenly through his Mass."

proportion I shall extend this resolution to all rny other liturgical functions : Sacraments, benedictions, burials, etc.

As regards my Breviary I shall take care to *settle in advance at what time* I shall say it ; when that time comes, I shall bind myself to drop what I am doing whatever the cost. Come what may, *I want this recitation of the Office to be a true prayer from the heart.* O divine Mediator, fill my soul with a horror of haste in those functions where I am taking Thy place or acting in the name of the Church. Make me understand that haste paralyses the *great Sacramental* which the Liturgy is, and prevents it from nourishing that spirit of prayer, without which, no matter how zealous a priest I may outwardly appear to be, I would be in Thine eyes only lukewarm or w'orse still. Impress on my heart those words that should make me tremble : *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.*[1]

Sometimes I shall let my heart be carried away and include in a panoramic view of the Faith the general meaning of the mystery recalled by the liturgical Cycle, and I shall nourish my soul with this comprehensive survey. At other times my Office will be a long, lingering act of faith or of hope, of desire or regret, of oblation or of love.

And again at other times a *simple look* wall be enough ; a look deep and long on a mystery, on a perfection of God, on one of Thy titles, O Jesus, on Thy Church, on my nothingness, my woes, my needs, or my dignity as a Christian, as a priest, as a religious ; a look quite different from an act of the intellect in the course of a study of theology ; a look which increases faith, but still more charity ; a look which is a faint reflection no doubt of the beatific vision, but which fulfils even here below what Thou hast promised to the pure and fervent. *Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.*[2]

* * *

Thus each ceremony will become a *restful change,* because

1. Maledictus qui facit opus Dei fraudulenter (Jer., XLVIII, io).
2. Beati mundo corde, quoniam ipsi Deum videbunt (Matt., V, 8).

it will give my soul a breathing space and relieve it from the press of occupations that stifle it.

O Holy Liturgy, what comfort you bring to my soul by your various functions. Far from being a slavish burden, they will become one of the greatest consolations of my life,

How could it be otherwise since through being continually reminded by you of my dignity as a child and ambassador of the Church, as a member and minister of Jesus Christ, I shall "put on" more and more Him who is the *Joy of the Elect?*

By my union with Him I shall learn to profit by the crosses of this mortal life to sow the seeds of my eternal happiness; and by my Liturgical Life which is far more powerful than any apostolate, I shall have the consolation of having attracted other souls to follow me in the path of salvation and of sanctity.

4. Custody oî the heart is the keystone of the interior Life, and thus the essence of the Apostolate.

RESOLUTION FOR CUSTODY OF THE HEART.

I wish, O Jesus, that my heart may be habitually solicitous to keep itself from every stain, and to become more united to Thy Heart in all my duties, conversations, recreations, etc.

The negative but indispensable element of this resolution is that I repudiate any blemish in my motives and in the way my undertakings are carried out.1

I. How is this purity of intention acquired?—By a close attention to oneself at the beginning and, above all, during the course of one's actions.

Why is this intention necessary at the beginning of our actions? —Because if these actions are agreeable, useful, or congenial to our natural tastes, we are attracted to them by our own natural impulse and by the attraction of pleasure or self-interest alone. Now we must pay very great attention and have great self-control to prevent our wih from being led away at first by the appeal of natural motives, which flatter, invite and charm.

Why do you add that this attention is above all necessary during the course of our actions?—Because even when we have been

The positive element makes me ambitious to wish to intensify the faith, hope and charity which give life to the action which I have begun.

This resolution will be the real test of the *practical value* of my morning mental prayer and my liturgical life. For my interior life will be what my custody of heart is : *With all watchfulness keep thy heart, because life issueth out from it.*[1]

Mental prayer and the Liturgical Life will enable me to make a start to unite myself with God. But it is the *custody of the heart* which will help the traveller to gain strength from the food taken before the journey began, or during a halt, so that he will always maintain the lively pace of the beginning.

This custody of the heart is simply *lhe habitual or at least frequent anxiety to keep all my actions, as I perform them, free from everything that could corrupt their motive or their performance.*

This anxiety must be calm, at ease, free from strain, at once humble and strong, since it is based on filial recourse to God and confidence in that recourse. It is the work of my heart and my will, much more than of my mind, which must remain free to carry out my many duties. Far from impeding my activity, custody of the heart makes it more perfect by regulating it by the spirit of God and adapting it to the duties of my state.

strong enough at first to renounce all the seductive attractions of the senses and of self-love in order to follow the directions of faith with a pure intention, nevertheless if we forget later on to watch over ourselves closely, the actual joy or pleasure that we feel, or the interest we find during certain actions always produces new impressions on us, and our heart slackens its fervour little by little ; so that our nature, though mortified by our former renunciation, awakens and regains its mastery ; soon self-love insinuates its selfish motives artfully and almost without our being aware of it ; putting them in the place of the good motives by which our actions had been undertaken and begun. Whence it happens on many occasions, as St. Paul says» ti|at having begun in the spirit, we finish in the flesh, Uret Ts, in low or selfish views (P. Caussade).

i. Omni custodia séfvà 'CW (/^uuf!|(k quia ex ipso vita procedit (Prov., IV, 23).

I resolve to practise this exercise continually. It will consist of a glance from the heart at my present action and a moderate attention to the different parts of the action, according as I perform them. It amounts to the exact observation of "Age quod agis." [1] My soul like a vigilant sentinel will exercise its watchfulness over all the movements of my heart, over everything that passes in my mind: impressions, intentions, passions, inclinations; in a word, over all my acts, interior and exterior, thoughts, words, deeds.

Obviously this custody of the heart *will require* a certain amount of recollection; and it cannot be realised if my soul is dissipated. But by the frequent practice of this exercise, I shall acquire little by little the *habit,* which will make custody of the heart easy for me.

Quo vadam et ad quid? [2] What would Our Lord do? How would He behave in my place? What would He advise? What does He ask of me at this moment? Such are the questions which will arise, of their own accord, in my soul eager for the interior life.

When I shall feel drawn to approach Jesus through Mary, this custody of the heart will become still more affective; and to have recourse to this kind Mother will become an incessant need of my heart.

Thus will be realised the words, *Abide in Me and I* tn *you,*[3] which sum up all the principles of the interior life. What Thou dost express, O Jesus, as the fruit of the Blessed Eucharist, *He abideth in Me and I in him,* is what my soul strives to attain by the custody of the heart which will unite me to Thee.

He abideth in me. Yes, I shall consider myself as truly at home in Thy divine Heart, with the right of disposing of all Thy riches, by making use of all the treasures of

1. Do what you do.—Apply yourself wholly to the matter in hand.

2. "Where am I going, and why?" Words of St. Ignatius of Loyola alluded to in *the Spiritual Exercises.*

3. Manete in me et ego in vobis.—In me manet et ego in eo. (Joan., XV, 4, 5).

sanctifying grace and the inexhaustible mine of Thine actual graces.

And I in him. Thanks to the custody of my heart, Thou too my beloved Saviour, wilt be truly at home in my poor soul. For as I make every effort to make sure of Thy continued influence on all my faculties, not only will I take care to do nothing without Thee, but my ambition will go the length of wishing to put into every one of my actions an ever increasing power of love.

The habit of interior recollection, of spiritual combat, of a busy, well-regulated life and an incalculable increase of merits will result from the custody of my heart.

Thus, 0 my Saviour, my *indirect* union with Thee through my works, that is to say, through the relations which, according to Thy Will, I shall have with creatures, will become the continuation of my *direct* union with Thee by Mental Prayer, the Liturgical Life and the Sacraments. In both these cases this union will proceed from faith and charity and will be formed under the influence of Thy grace. In the direct union, it is *Thou* and *Thou alone,* O my God, that I have in view ; in the indirect union I apply myself to other objects. But since it is in obedience to Thee that I do so, these objects to which I have to give my attention become the *means intended by Thee* to unite myself to Thee ; I leave Thee in order to find Thee again ; *it is always Thou,* that I am seeking, and with the same affection, but now I seek Thee *in Thy Will ;* and this divine Will is the sole beacon that the custody of my heart allows me to fix my gaze on in order to direct all my actions to Thy service. In both cases I can therefore say, *It is good for me to adhere to my God. 1*

It is an error then to believe that in order to unite myself to Thee, I must *put off my active work or wait till my work is ended ;* it is an error to suppose that certain works, by their very nature or because of the amount of time they take, may *enslave me* or *hamper my liberty* to such an extent that union with Thee is impossible. No,i.

i. Λ-Iihi adhaerere Deo bonum est (Psalm., LXXII, 28}.

Thou wishest me to be free ; Thou dost not wish that activity should keep me enslaved. Thou dost wish me to *he the. master* and not the slave of activity ; and for this end Thou offerest me Thy grace, on condition that I am faithful to the custody of my heart.

From the moment then that supernatural commonsense has made me discern, by the many events, circumstances, or details contrived by Thy Providence, that a certain activity is linked truly to Thy Will, my duty is *neither to avoid it, nor to do it merely for the pleasure it may give me.* I must undertake it and carry it out, but *solely in order to do Thy Will.* For otherwise self-love would corrupt its value and diminish its merits.1 If perceiving what Thou wishest, O Jesus, and how Thou dost wish it done, *Quod et quomodo Deus vult,* I then do it because Thou wishest it, *Quia Deus vult,* my union with Thee, far from becoming less, will only be intensified all the more.

I. Necessity for custody of the heart.

My God, Thou art Holiness itself and here below Thou dost admit a soul to Thy friendship only *in the measure in which it applies itself* to destroy or to avoid everything that might soil or contaminate it.

Let me consider a few of these venial sins : spiritual laziness preventing me from raising my heart to Thee ; inordinate affection for creatures ; haste and impatience ;

I. "Good acts," says Father Desurmont, "conceal within themselves a pleasure, an honour, a glory, something unexplainable of which human nature is extremely fond, fonder often than of evil itself. The soul is not on its guard against this cankering worm, this refined selfishness which destroys actual grace.

The Lord through kindness for us as much as through jealousy for His glory has declared Himself indifferent to all particular good things. He has decided that only one thing would please Him, His Will. So that a trifle in conformity with this Will merits heaven, while wonders performed without it go unrewarded. So we must propose in everything not simply to do good, but the good that God wishes us to do, that is to say His holy Will " *(Le retour conti nuel à Dieu).*

nursing a grievance, fickleness, effeminacy, love of ease.; readiness to speak of other people's faults without any reason ; dissipation, curiosity having no relation to the glory of God ; talkativeness, tattling, vain and rash judgments about my neighbour ; vain self-complacency ; contempt of others ; criticism of their conduct ; looking for admiration and praise and doing things for these motives; showing off what is to my advantage ; presumption, obstinacy, jealousy, lack of respect for authority, grousing ; want of mortification in eating and drinking, etc. What *a swarm of venial sins* or at least of deliberate imperfections may invade my soul and deprive me of the abundant graces which Thou didst reserve for me from all eternity.

What good will my Mental Prayer and my Liturgical Life produce, if they do not gradually help me to keep my soul on the alert against even faults of *simple weakness* ; if they do not help me to rise again *promptly* the moment my will begins to give way, and if they do not urge me even to impose a penance on myself in certain cases ?

To think that I can *paralyse* the action of Our Lord in myself through want of custody of the heart ! Masses, Communions, Confessions, other exercises of piety, the the special protection of divine Providence with regard to my eternal salvation, the solicitude of my guardian angel, even your maternal watchfulness over me, O Mother Immaculate, *all these may be paralysed and made barren by my own fault.*

If I am wanting in good-will to impose upon myself that restraint to which Thou, O Jesus, makest allusion by these words. *The violent bear it away,*[1] Satan will ever be seeking to surprise my heart and lead it astray and weaken it, and he will even succeed in perverting my conscience with his illusions.

Some of your failings, 0 my soul, that you call mere weakness, are perhaps of a different nature, different in the eyes of God. If you do not practise custody of the heart, if you do not strive to realise this programme : " I wishi.

1. Violenti rapiunt illud (Matth., XI, 12).

to reach the point of keeping Jesus as the motive of each of my actions," how can you reach any other conclusion ? If 1 do not resolve upon custody of the heart, not only am I piling up fearful and prolonged expiations for Purgatory, but even if I as yet avoid mortal sin, I am on the slope which inevitably leads to it. Reflect on this, O my soul.

II. The presence oî God, the foundation of custody of the heart.

O Holy Trinity, if, as I hope, I am in the state of grace, *then you are dwelling in my heart* with all your glory, with all your infinite perfections, just as you dwell in heaven, though hidden here under the veil of faith.

There is not a moment in which *your eyes are not on me,* seeing all I do. Your justice and your mercy *are always at work in me.* As a penance for my infidelity sometimes you withdraw your special graces or you cease to arrange lovingly events which would turn out for my advantage ; at other times to bring me back to You You overwhelm me with fresh kindness.

If I regarded your indwelling in me as an event of the highest importance and *the most worthy of attracting my attention,* should I be forgetful of it so often and for such long periods ? Is it not this failure to attend to a *fundamental fact* of my existence that has caused this lack of success, which up to the present has met all my attempts to acquire custody of heart ?

Ejaculatory prayers uttered without intermission throughout the day ought to have reminded me of this loving indwelling of God in my heart. *Have you done enough, my soul, up to the present, to fill your life with these little landmarks at least once in an hour ?* Have you gained enough profit from your daily Mental Prayer and your Liturgical Life to retire from time to time, if only for a few seconds, into the inner sanctuary of your heart, in order to adore there the infinite Splendour, the Immensity, the Omnipotence, the Holiness, the Life, the Love, in a word the *supreme and perfect Good,* who deigns to dwell therein, and who is your Beginning and your End ?

When do *spiritual communions* take place during my day? Yet they are at my disposal every moment not only to remind me of the indwelling of the Most Holy Trinity in me, but still more to *increase this indwelling by a fresh increase of the Precious Blood in my soul!*

What value have I placed up to now on these treasures that lie in my path? I had only to stoop to pick up diamonds and place them in my diadem. How far removed am I from those souls who, *in the midst of their work or their conversation,* return hundreds of times in the day to their divine guest! They have acquired this habit and *their hearts are fixed where their treasure is.*

III. Devotion to Our Lady helps custody oî the heart.

O my Immaculate Mother, the words of your Son on Calvary have made me your child, in order that you might help me to keep my heart united through Jesus to the Holy Trinity.

I wish that the invocations, which *ever more frequently* I shall address to you may be directed above all to this custody of my heart, so that I may purify all its tendencies, intentions, affections and wishes. I no longer wash to close my ears to your gentle voice: "Stop, my son, *keep an upright heart;* no, it is not true that at this moment you are seeking only for the glory of God." How often during my times of dissipation or questionable occupations have you addressed this maternal appeal to me! and how often, alas! have I stifled it!

My Mother, henceforth I shall listen to *your Heart reminding me of the truth,* and my fidelity will respond to it by an *energetic and prompt recollection.* It may pass like a flash, but it will give me time to put to myself one of these questions: "For whom am I doing this? How would Jesus act in my place?" This inward questioning, when it becomes a habit, will constitute custody of the heart. Even in the smallest details, it will enable me to keep my faculties and all their impulses in an ever more perfect *habit of subjection* to God living within me.

IV. Apprenticeship ot the custody oï the heart.

I lament that I remain out of the presence of God for long intervals during the course of my day's work. 1 lament when I realise that during this period of external life numerous faults are committed irrespective of the state of my soul, whether I display a mixture of fervour and imperfection, or whether I am manifestly lukewarm ; I wish to begin to-day to remedy this, by practising custody of the heart.

In the morning during my mental prayer I shall determine firmly and precisely upon *a certain moment during my work,* when I shall strive, even while devoting myself earnestly to the work in hand and which is the Will of God, to live *as perfect* an interior life *as possible* by custody of the heart, that is, watchfulness over myself in Thy presence, O Jesus, always having recourse to Thee *as if* I had made the vow always to do what is most perfect.

I shall begin by five minutes of recollection, or even less, morning and evening ; 1 in this exercise I shall aim more at perfection than at length, I shall strive to do it better and better, and to act *in the midst of my work,* especially *if it is absorbing,* in the fashion of a saint, by practising purity of intention, custody of the heart and of all my faculties, and generosity of soul ; in a word, doing everything *as Otir Lord Himself would,* if He had to do the same work.

This will be *an apprenticeship of practical interior life ;* it will be a protest against my habit of dissipation and the *wandering of my mind.* I want Our Lord ; I want Hisi.

i. This is practically what Bousset calls *"the moment of loving solitude,* which we must contrive, at any cost, during the day."

It is also what St. Francis of Sales so strongly recommended under the name of *spiritual retreats: "* In this exercise of the spiritual retreat and ejaculatory prayers lies the great work of devotion. This exercise *may supply the place of almost all other* prayers, but the want of it can *hardly ever be repaired* by any other means. Without this exercise it is impossible to lead an active life otherwise than badly . . . and work is only an obstacle to us *(Intro, to Devout Life,* Part 2, c. III).

kingdom ; 1 want His reign to continue in me when the time for exterior work comes. I do not want my mind to be any longer like a passage-way open to every wind, where it would be impossible to live united to Our Lord, but I wish it to be vigilant, prayerful, generous.

During this brief moment of recollection, my mind will examine, without straining, the various motives of my actions and will not forgive any fault. My good-will in its turn will be earnestly determined to spare no effort to live perfectly during this short interval. My heart will be resolved to have frequent recourse to Our Lord in order to maintain itself in this *attempt at sanctity*. This exercise will be *cordial, joyous, and accompanied by expansion of the soul.* Of course, vigilance and mortification will be necessary' to keep myself in the presence of God and to deny my faculties and my senses anything that looks like giving way to nature. But I shall not be satisfied with this negative attitude. I shall aim especially at *putting into this exercise an intensity of love,* w'hich, by making me practise with the greatest care the *Age quod agis,* first by purity of intention, and then with ever increasing ardour, unselfishness and generosity, will give to my w'orks all their perfection and all their value.

In the evening at my general examination of conscience (or at the particular examen, if I make this exercise its subject), I shall make in the presence of Our Lord a strict and thorough analysis of what took place during these minutes of custody of the heart ; then I shall impose a sanction, some slight penance (some deprivation of food at meals which no one will notice, or a short prayer with arms outstretched in the form of a cross, or a few smart raps w'ith a ruler on the fingers), if I find that I have not been vigilant enough, fervent enough, prayerful enough, loving enough during this attempt at custody of the heart, that is to say, in the union of interior and active life.

What wonderful results will spring from this practice ! *What a school of custody of the heart !* What new' light it will throw on sins and imperfections whose existence I did not suspect !

These blessed moments *will little by little virtually illuminate those that follow them.* Nevertheless I shall not prolong them until I shall first have accomplished all that I am capable of in holiness, perfection of execution and intensity of love. I shall aim at quality rather than extent. My thirst to spend more than a few short minutes at this exercise will grow keener in proportion as I see more exactly what I am and what Thou dost expect from me, O Jesus. Thus little by little growing familiar with this wholesome exercise, *I shall contract the need for it, and acquire the habit* of it, and Thou shalt reveal to my soul thus purified the secrets of the life of union with Thee.

V. Conditions oî custody oî the heart.

The whole course of my life is more or less stained with sin. From this *conviction,* which Satan tries to obscure, springs *distrust* of myself and of creatures. This conviction, *grafted on to my desire to belong to Jesus* will necessarily produce : *vigilance,* loyal and exact, gentle, peaceful, trusting in grace and based on the repression of dissipation and of the excess of natural enthusiasm ; frequent *renewal* of my resolution ; unwearied *beginning again,* full of confidence in the mercy of Jesus for the soul that really strives to obtain custody of the heart ; an ever increasing certainty that I do not fight *alone,* but in union with Jesus living in me, with Mary my Mother, with my Angel Guardian and the Saints ; a confident assurance that these powerful allies are always assisting me, as long as I observe custody of the heart and do not neglect their help ; finally a *cordial and frequent recourse* to these divine aids, that they may help me to do *Quod Deus vult* and to do it *quomodo Deus vult el quia Deus vult.*[1]

Oh ! how my life will be transformed, O Jesus, if I keep my heart united to Thine !

My mind will be able to apply itself to the task of the moment. But I wish to be able to realise even in the course

1. What God wishes, as God wishes and because God wishes it.

of the most absorbing labours what I have noted in souls that are exceedingly busy but whose heart never ceases to *breathe in Thee.*

If I have fully grasped what custody of the heart means, far from diminishing the *freedom of action* necessary to enable my *faculties* to accomplish all the duties of my state, my soul breathing in the atmosphere of love, in which Thou art, O Jesus, will only *increase* that freedom and make my life calm, serene, powerful and fruitful.

Instead of being the slave of my pride, of my selfishness or of my laziness, instead of groaning under the yoke of my passions and emotions, I shall become more and more free. And with my increased liberty I shall be able, O my God, to pay Thee frequently, the homage of my submission. Thus I shall be strengthened in *true humility,* the foundation of my interior life. Thus I shall develop in my soul the fundamental spirit of submission, *Submissio ad Deum,*[1] which sums up the whole inner life of the Saviour.

Sharing in the flame of love which made Thee, O Jesus, always so attentive and docile to the good pleasure of Thy Father, I shall merit in heaven a share of the glory which Thy humanity enjoys as a reward for its admirable submission by humility and love, *Becoming obedient . . . for which cause God also hath exalted Him.*[2]

5. The Apostle must have an ardent devotion to Mary Immaculate.

As a member of the Order of the Cistercians, so intimately consecrated to Mary, and as a son of St. Bernard, who was the peerless apostle of Europe for half a century, how can I forget that the holy Abbot of Clairvaux attributed to Mary all his progress in union with Jesus and all his success in tire Apostolate ?

Everyone know's of the success of the apostolate of this

1. Humility consists especially in the submission of man to God (S. Thom.).

2. Factus obediens . . . propter quod et Deus exaltavit illum (Philipp., II, 9).

most illustrious of the sons of St. Benedict, which embraced peoples and kings, Councils and even Popes.

Everyone praises the holiness, the genius, the deep knowledge of Holy Scripture, and the penetrating unction of the writings of this the last of the Fathers of the Church.

But what sums up the admiration of the ages for this holy Doctor is the title of "Harper of Mary," *Cytharista Mariae,* which has been conferred upon him. This "Bard of Mary" has never been surpassed by any of those who have celebrated the glories of the Mother of God. St. Bernardine of Sienna and St. Francis de Sales, as well as Bossuet, St. Alphonsus, St. Grignon de Montfort, etc., all draw deeply from the treasures of St. Bernard when they wish to speak of her, and find arguments to support that great truth which the holy Doctor proclaims: "Everythings comes to us by Mary."

"See, my brethren, with what feelings of devotion God has wished us to honour Mary, He who has placed in her the fulness of all good. If there is in us any hope, any grace, any pledge of salvation, let us recognise that all this overflows on us from her who is 'flowing with delights.' Take away the sun, which enlightens the world, and light disappears. Take away Mary, that star of the sea, of our great vast sea, and what remains but a deep obscurity, the shadow of death and thick darkness? It is therefore from the depths of our hearts, from our innermost being, and with all our soul that we must honour the Virgin Mary; for such is the will of Him who wished us to have all through her." [1]

Relying on the strength of this doctrine we do not hesitate to declare that *whatever the apostle may do for his own salvation and spiritual progress and for the success of his apostolate, he runs the risk of building only on sand, if his activity is not based on a very special devotion to Our Lady:*

(a) For his personal interior life.—The apostle is not sufficiently devoted to Maty', his confidence in her has

1. *Sermon on the Nativity of the H.* F. *M.* otherwise named *de Aquaeductu* (St. Bernard!.

no enthusiasm, if the homage he renders her is almost entirely exterior. Like her Son she "searcheth the heart," she judges us her true children only by the strength with which our love corresponds to hers.

We must have therefore a heart that is firmly convinced of the glories, the privileges and the functions of her who is at the same time the Mother of God and the Mother of men; a heart that is convinced of this truth that the struggle against our defects, the acquisition of virtues, the reign of Jesus Christ in souls and consequently the guarantee of sanctification and salvation, are in proportion to the degree of our devotion to Mary;[1] a heart that is possessed by this thought that everything is easier, surer, sweeter and quicker in the interior life when we act with Mary;[2] a heart that is full to overflowing with filial confidence, come what may, towards her whose affection, kindliness, tenderness, mercy and generosity we know by experience;[3] a heart that is ever more and more on fire with love for her who is associated with all our joys, to whom we confide all our sorrows, and through whom all our affections pass.

All these sentiments reflect the heart of St. Bernard, who is the model for the man devoted to good works. Who does not know the words that surged from the heart of this holy Abbot, when, in explaining to his monks the Gospel *Missus est,* he cried out:

"O you, who in the ebb and flow of this age are aware that you are tossed in the midst of storms and tempests rather than walking upon the earth, keep your eyes fixed on this star, so that you may not perish in the gale. If the winds of temptations are let loose, if you are striking

1. Nobody is saved except by you, O Mother of God. Nobody receives the gift of God except by you, O full of grace (Sr. Germain). —Holiness increases in proportion to the devotion that one professes for Mary (Fr. Faber).

2. With Mary we make more progress in the love of Jesus in one month than we make in years while living less united to this good Mother (St. Grignon de Montfort).

3. Filioli, haec mea maxima fiducia est, haec tota ratio spei meae. My children, she is the foundation of my confidence and the whole reason of my hope (St. Bernard).

on the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. If you are flung about by the waves of pride, of ambition, of scandal, of jealousy, look on the star, call upon Mary. If anger or avarice or evil desires attack the frail bark of your soul, lift up your eyes to Mary. If, crushed under the enormity of your sins, in confusion at the horrible wounds of your conscience, alarmed by the horror of the judgment, you begin to be drawn into the whirlpool of sadness and despair, think of Mary. In dangers, in anguish, in doubt, think of Mary, invoke Mary. Let Mary never be far from your lips, never far from your heart; and to obtain the support of her prayer, do not forget the example of her life. In following her, you shall not go astray; by praying to her you shall not despair; in contemplating her you shall not go wrong. With her support you fall not; under her protection you fear not; under her guidance you do not grow weary; if she is propitious to you, you will reach the port."

Obliged to limit this work and yet wishing to offer my confrères in the apostolate a sort of summary of the advice of St. Bernard that we should become true children of Mary, I think I cannot do better than invite them to read carefully the solid and valuable volume, "*La vie spirituelle à l'ecole du Bienheureux Grignon de Montfort,*" written by Father Lhomeau.1

Along with the works of St. Alphonsus and the commentaries of Father Desurmont, the writings of Father Faber, and of Father Giraud of la Salette, this book of Father Lhomeau gives a complete exposition of the teaching of St. Bernard, whom he constantly quotes. Solid theological basis, unction, practical character, nothing is wanting to achieve the result which the Abbot of Clairvaux was always striving to attain, namely to form the hearts of his children after the image of his own and give them what was the outstanding mark of Cistercian writers, *the need of constant recourse to Mary and the life of union with her.*

1. Oudin, Paris.—Father Lhoumeau was Superior General of the Congregation founded by St. Grignon de Montfort.

Let us conclude with the consoling words that the admirable Cistercian nun, St. Gertrude, whom Dom Guéranger calls Gertrude the Great, heard from the lips of the Blessed Virgin : "You should not call my most sweet Jesus my only Son, but my first-born son. I conceived Him first in my womb, but after Him or rather through Him I have conceived all of you to be His brothers and to be my children, by adopting you in the womb of my maternal charity." Everything in the writings of this holy Patroness of the Trappistine nuns reflects the spirit of her Holy Father St. Bernard with regard to the life of union with Mary.

(b) For the success of the apostolate.—Whether the apostle has to rescue souls from sin or to make virtues blossom in their souls, he must always, following the example of St. Paul, have as his first object, to bring forth Our Lord in these souls. " Now God," says Bossuet, " having once washed to give us Jesus Christ by the Blessed Virgin, this order does not change " ; she has brought forth the Head, so she must bring forth the members.

To isolate Mary from the apostolate would be to disregard one of the essential parts of the divine plan. " All the elect," says St. Augustine, " are in this world hidden in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, where they are guarded, nourished, cherished and reared by this loving Mother until after death she brings them forth to glory."

" Since the Incarnation," justly concludes St. Bernardine of Sienna, " Mary has acquired a sort of jurisdiction over every temporal mission of the Holy Ghost, in such a way that no creature receives grace except through her hands."

But in his turn the truly devout servant of Mary becomes all powerful over her Heart. Hence, what apostle can doubt the efficacy of his apostolate if through his devotion he controls the omnipotence of Mary over the Precious Blood ?

Thus we see that all the great converters of souls were filled with extraordinary devotion towards the Blessed Virgin. Did they wish to save a soul from sin ? What persuasive fervour they possessed, identified as they were

by their horror of evil and their love of purity, with her who has been called the Immaculate Conception ?

It was by the voice of Mary that the Precursor recognised the presence of Jesus and leapt in his mother's womb. What persuasive accents will not Mary give to her true children so that they may open to Jesus hearts until then closed ! What consoling words the intimate friends of the Mother of God know how to find when they want to prevent despair taking hold of souls who have for a long time abused grace !

Have they to deal with a hapless soul that knows not Mary ? The assurance with which the apostle shows her to be the True Mother and the Refuge of sinners opens new horizons to such a soul.

The holy Curé of Ars met at times sinners who, blinded by delusions, relied on some exterior practice of devotion towards the Blessed Virgin to calm their conscience, to let them sin more at their ease and have no fear of the eternal flames of hell. In such cases his words were all-powerful, both to show to the guilty ones the monstrosity of such insulting presumption towards the Mother of Mercy and to make them use this actual devotion to implore the grace of escaping from the clutches of the infernal serpent.

In a similar situation the apostle who has but slight devotion to Mary will succeed by his sharp cold words only in making the poor shipwrecked sinner abandon the plank which w'ould have floated him to safety.

When Mary is living in the heart of an apostle he will be assured of that mother's persuasive eloquence helping him to move souls with whom all else has failed. It would seem that, with admirable delicacy, Our Lord has wished to reserve to the mediation of His Mother the most difficult conquests of the apostolate and to grant them only to those who live in devotion to her. " Through thee He has reduced our enemies to nought." *Per te ad nihilum redegit inimicos nostros.*

The true son of Mary will never be at a loss for arguments, or means or even expedients when, in almost hopeless cases, he has to strengthen the weak, or console the inconsolable.

The decree which added to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin the invocation, "Mother of Good Counsel," was based on the titles of "Treasury of heavenly graces" and of "Universal Consoler" *(Caelestium gratiarum thesauraria, Consolatrix universalis')* which are Mary's due. "Mother of Good Counsel," she gives as at Cana only to those who are truly her servants, the secret of obtaining from God the wine of joy and strength in order to distribute them to men.

But it is especially when they have to speak to souls about the love of God that this "Ravisher of hearts," *Raptrix cordium,* as St. Bernard calls her, the Spouse of Him whose essence is Love Itself, places on the lips of her friends those words of fire which enkindle the love of Jesus and through it cause all virtues to blossom forth.

As priests we must passionately love her whom Pius IX called *Virgo sacerdos,* the Priestly Virgin, whose dignity surpasses in every way that of priests and pontiffs. This love gives us the right never to give up a task as fruitless, if we have once begun it with Mary and if we wish to continue it with her; for Mary in fact is at the base and the summit of everything that concerns the reign of God through her Son.

But do not let us think that we are working along with her, if we confine ourselves merely to raising altars to her or singing hymns in her honour. What she wants from us is a devotion which allows us to affirm in all sincerity that we live *habitually* united with her, that we have recourse to her counsel, that our affections pass through her heart and that our petitions are frequently made through her. But what Mary expects above all, in our devotion is the imitation of all the virtues that we admire in her and our total abandonment of ourselves without reserve into her hands, that through her we may "put on" her divine Son.

On this condition of our *constant recourse to* Mary we shall imitate that general of the army of the People of God, wiio before marching against the enemy said to Deborah, "If thou wilt come *with me,* I will go; if thou wilt not come with me, I will not go"; and thus we shall truly accomplish

all our works *with her.* Not only will she be concerned with the chief decisions of our lives, but also with the details of their execution, even the most unforeseen.

United with her whose invocation," Our Lady of the Sacred Heart," sums up for us all her titles, we shall never run the risk of failing in our work by allowing it to hinder our interior Life, to become a danger to our souls and serve more for our own glory than for the glory of God. On the contrary, our work will be a means to interior life, and thus to an intimate union with her who will guarantee us the possession of her Son for all eternity.

EPILOGUE

Before the throne of Mary Immaculate we lay the offering of this humble work.

She lives in Jesus, through Jesus, by His life, His love, and in union with His sacrifice ; and Jesus speaks in her and by her. Jesus is her life and she carries the Word, she makes us hear His voice and shows us Jesus as in the Monstrance.

Thus the soul devoted to the highest of works, the apostolate, must live with God in order to be able to speak of Him with the best results for souls ; the active life, let us repeat it once more, should be in the Christian soul only the overflow of its interior life.

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